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EO 13526 1.4(c)<25Yrs

APPROVED FOR RELEASE - Historical Programs Staff DATE: 26-Mar-2018

THE DD/I HISTORICAL SERIES

OCI - 5

KEEPING THE PRESIDENT INFORMED

Current Intelligence Support for the White House

by

October 1973

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KEEPING THE PRESIDENT INFORMED

Current Intelligence Support for the White House

A President has to know what is going on all around the world in order to be ready to act when action is needed.

--Harry S. Truman

From the beginning of the Republic, our Presidents have always required ^{foreign} intelligence and have always received it. Its character has not always been the same, however. Over most of our history Presidents have received what we would now call "raw intelligence," i.e., ~~a~~ direct field reports of ~~a~~ new foreign developments. The President or other high official receiving such a piece of raw intelligence was expected to be able to see the meaning of it and to fit it into the framework of the knowledge he already had.

Except for materials gotten together especially for international conferences, intelligence in the US Government remained mostly of the "raw" variety until World War II. Even then, President Roosevelt acquired his information to a great extent from field reports submitted by Ambassadors and other representatives he knew personally and trusted. In 1943, for example, while he was operating from a villa on the island of Capri, General Donovan sent the President reports from OSS agents in Yugoslavia. ¹~~13~~/ Later Donovan personally gave the President some of the excellent documents on the Nazis that Allen Dulles had obtained from his agent

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Kolbe. ²~~2~~/ When Robert Murphy went to North Africa in 1940 essentially on an intelligence mission, he was told by Roosevelt, "If you learn anything in Africa of special interest, send it to me. Don't bother going through State Department channels." ³~~2~~/

Already, however, the idea had taken hold in Washington of producing "finished intelligence," i.e., freshly written accounts of foreign developments, reflecting usually several or many sources. The writer of finished intelligence was selective in the use of his raw material, leaving out portions of dubious value, relevance, or authenticity. Moreover, he gave added meaning to his information by offering interpretations of it. William J. Donovan's Office of Strategic Services began writing analyses of situations, based on a wide variety of information, and the Army-Navy Joint Intelligence Committee undertook the preparation of estimates.

Even before Pearl Harbor, William L. Langer's Research and Analysis (R and A) Branch of OSS began putting out a printed interpretive publication called The War This Week, which had a high-level circulation and may have gone to the White House. Ray S. Cline, who headed the Current Intelligence Staff of R and A in the last year of the War, says, however, that the publication lacked good sources, especially

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for military information. 4/ The Pentagon passed very little cable traffic to OSS.

At the same time, the Army-Navy Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) was turning out a Daily Summary. In January 1943, the Joint Chiefs of Staff decided that JIC should produce a weekly instead of a daily. Apparently there was not room for two weeklies, so they directed Donovan to discontinue The War This Week. 5/ Donovan stopped disseminating his weekly outside OSS and changed its name to the O.S.S. Weekly Survey, but otherwise continued the publication for a while. His staff was also required to support the new JIC Weekly Summary and made use of the material in the Survey. Donovan's editor, [] wrote to Donovan criticizing the new JIC Weekly produced by Lt. Col. Ludwell Montague, Secretary of the JIC. McKay said Montague had "altered our document in such a way as to remove most of the substance..." leaving "a document which could have been circulated as 'free' instead of 'secret'". 6/

The OSS current intelligence staff also produced an unpretentious though top secret Daily Summary, which was intended mainly to brief the OSS chiefs. It also went to the White House, though Cline doesn't know what happened to it there. It consisted for the most part of gists of State cables, with very little comment. Donovan also sent the President a weekly report on Axis broadcasts, which included a typed summary of highlights.

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If the problem with OSS publications was that they lacked good military material, the problem with the JIC publications was that they did not utilize State cables. In essence, the JIC was issuing departmental intelligence.

Donovan felt that the President was entitled to an objective view of developments and to one based on knowledge of all the relevant intelligence. He also regarded estimates as "the end product of intelligence activity." ⁷/₁ As the War drew to a close, he urged the creation of a permanent, centralized intelligence organization. In his final proposal to President Roosevelt dated 18 November, 1944, he recommended that a new agency collect, evaluate, and synthesize the intelligence required to enable the Government to determine policies with respect to national planning and security in peace and war. ⁸/₂ A week before his death the next April, Roosevelt asked Donovan to obtain a consensus on the proposed new agency. The replies from State and The Pentagon were unfavorable, with the result that nothing further was done until after the defeat of Japan.

Truman's Creation: The CIG

The month after Tokyo's surrender, President Truman dissolved OSS--evidently regarding it as a wartime organization--and ^{divided}~~distributed~~ its functions between the Army and the

State Department.

At the same time, he did not like the intelligence service he was getting. He was receiving too many pieces of paper without ^{getting} all the information he needed. In his writings, Mr. Truman has told us more about his views and actions in regard to intelligence than any other President. In Mr. President, published while he was still in office, Truman says that in 1945:

Strange as it may seem, the President up to that time was not completely informed as to what was taking place in the world. Messages that came to the different departments of the executive branch often were not relayed to him because some official did not think it was necessary to inform the President. The President did not see many useful cables and telegrams that came from different American representatives abroad. 9/

In his Memoirs Truman writes of the "scattered method" of getting information for the government before the War and how he later felt that if there had been "something like coordination of information in the government it would have been more difficult, if not impossible, for the Japanese to succeed in the sneak attack at Pearl Harbor."

On becoming President, I found that the needed intelligence information was not coordinated at any one place. Reports came across my desk on the same subject at different times from the various departments, and these reports often conflicted. 10/

He "decided to put an end to this state of affairs."

Truman learned from Fleet Admiral William D. Leahy, the Chief of Staff to the Commander-in-Chief, of Gen. Donovan's plan for a postwar intelligence organization and of counter-proposals by State and the Pentagon. He decided to adopt essentially the Army and Navy plan, which gave a voice to all the national security agencies in the preparation of estimates.

On 22 January 1946 President Truman issued his historic letter to the Secretaries of State, War, and Navy, directing them to cooperate to establish a Central Intelligence Group (CIG) to be headed by a Director of Central Intelligence appointed by the President. The departments were to make personnel and facilities available to the CIG. The first duty of the DCI listed by the President was to:

Accomplish the correlation and evaluation of intelligence relating to the national security, and the appropriate dissemination within the Government of the resulting strategic and national policy intelligence. // ~~S~~/

The DCI was responsible to a National Intelligence Authority (NIA) made up of the State, War and Navy Secretaries and the President's personal representative, Admiral Leahy. The Director was to be advised by an Intelligence Advisory Board (IAB) consisting of the heads of the principal intelligence agencies.

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The President appointed Rear Admiral Sidney W. Souers, a former Deputy Chief of Naval Intelligence, to be the first Director of Central Intelligence. a/ Within a couple of days, Souers obtained ten people from State and the services. They were housed in the New War Department Building, now part of the State Department Building. James S. Lay, Jr., then with State but formerly Secretary of the Joint Intelligence Committee, became Executive Secretary of the NIA.

a/ In her biography of her father, Margaret Truman notes how he was "even able to joke about serious things." One day he sent the following memorandum to Admiral Leahy and Rear Admiral Sidney W. Souers:

To My Brethren and Fellow Doghouse Denizens:

By Virtue of the authority vested in me as Top Dog I require and charge that Front Admiral William D. Leahy and Rear Admiral Sidney W. Souers, receive and accept the vestments and appurtenances of their respective positions, namely as personal snooper and as director of centralized snooping.... I charge that each of you not only seek to better our foreign relations through more intensive snooping but also keep me informed constantly of the movements and actions of the other, for without such coordination there can be no order and no aura of mutual trust.

H.S.T.

(Margaret Truman, Harry S. Truman, William Morrow and Co., New York, 1973, p. 332)

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The first meeting of the NIA was held on 5 February 1946 and was presided over by Secretary of State Byrnes. By this time the President had said that he wanted the CIG to write him a single, comprehensive daily intelligence summary. Byrnes opened the meeting by stating that he was responsible for

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reporting to the President on matters of foreign policy.

The minutes of the meeting record that:

Admiral Souers explained his understanding was that the President wanted him only to go through the dispatch traffic and make a digest of significant developments. Admiral Souers emphasized that there was no intention that he should interpret these dispatches or advise the President on any matters of foreign policy. His report was intended to be purely factual as regards the activities of the US in the field of foreign affairs.

Admiral Leahy expressed his understanding that the President wanted the information from all three departments (State, War, and Navy) summarized in order to keep himself currently informed. Admiral Leahy pointed out that Secretary Byrnes presents the viewpoint of the Department of State while the President would like to receive significant information available in all three departments in a single summary. 1228/

Byrnes took his case personally to the President, contending that State Department information was not intelligence within the jurisdiction of the CIG. Truman replied that it was information he needed--therefore it was intelligence to him. 134/

At the second meeting of the NIA on 8 February, Byrnes said he had talked to the President, who assured him that only factual statements were desired. Byrnes therefore got NIA

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to make this crystal clear in the language of NIA Directive No. 2, adopted that day. ¹⁴~~24~~/ This directive laid two initial tasks on the CIG. The first was the "Production of daily summaries containing factual statements of the significant developments in the field of intelligence and operations related to the national security and to foreign events for the use of the President, the members of this Authority, and additional distribution..." (high-ranking military persons). The second task was to survey existing facilities for collecting foreign intelligence and to submit recommendations. ¹⁵~~5~~/

It was understood that the President wanted to be informed about what the US was doing as well as what foreign countries were doing.

A week after Directive No. 2, the Central Reports Staff of CIG published the first issue of the Daily Summary. Dated 15 February 1946, this issue had a top secret classification and only two dittoed pages. Six items were arranged under three categories: General, Europe-Africa, and Far East. Here is the gist of the intelligence they conveyed:

Secret Yalta and Tehran Agreements for Sale in Paris: Embassy Paris reports that "some Russians" are offering alleged US-Soviet agreements for sale and that some newspapers are considering their publication. In one of eleven agreements, the US supposedly recognized a Soviet claim of free access to the Mediterranean in return for Soviet agreement to the absolute independence of Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia.

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Germany: The War Department has authorized Gen. McNarney to announce the discontinuance of relief by 1 July for all displaced persons in the US Zone.

Turkey: The Soviet Ambassador in Ankara says that the reestablishment of friendly Soviet-Turkish relations depends on the right of the Soviets to use bases in the Straits when the need arises.

Yugoslavia: Communist press attacks on the Allied Military Government in Venezia Giulia are mounting.

China: The US commander of the Chinese Theatre reports that he is moving five Chinese armies plus service troops north for the occupation of Manchuria.

French Indochina: The Chinese Foreign Office reports that negotiations with France on Indochina are in the final stage. Among the provisions are that China will retain its prewar rights although it will withdraw its troops.

Reading the early issues of the Daily Summary furnishes a preview of many of the most difficult and tenacious post-war problems. In February, one article reported that the theme of debate in the British House of Commons had shifted from that of "getting along with the USSR" to that of "standing up to Russia." Foreign Minister Bidault said France would pursue a conciliatory policy in Indochina to the limit, but the US Navy thought the French would invade Indochina by land, airborne operations, and amphibious landings, and would encounter Annamese resistance. The Soviets were forcing a Communist government on North Korea and were trying to wangle Communist representation in the South Korean govern-

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ment. In March growing support for the opposition in Bulgaria made the Communists apprehensive of holding elections until a peace treaty was signed. The Soviets took control of the Hungarian radio and gave it a pro-Soviet and anti-British bias.

As time went on, the Summary cautiously introduced interpretations of events and also comments, labelled as such. The first comment appeared in the issue of 16 December 1946, which reported that [redacted]

[redacted], Moscow was making plans to have Spanish and French Communists stage uprisings in Spain in support of parachute landings by combat groups of exiled Spaniards. The item ended with ^{the} warning: "C.I.G. Comment: This report should be viewed with caution as a possible propaganda move on the part of the Spanish Army which has long been trying to demonstrate to the US that the USSR and French Communists plan aggressive action against Spain."

At the second meeting of the Intelligence Advisory Board (IAB) on 26 March 1946, Admiral Souers reported that he had plans for a CIG Weekly Summary. The Central Reports Staff had worked up several trial issues, but the staff needed strengthening before publication could begin. The Admiral was negotiating with the departments for more personnel.

By prior agreement with the President, Admiral Souers

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remained DCI for only six months. On the day--10 June 1946-- that he was succeeded by Lt. Gen. Hoyt S. Vandenberg, they both attended the fifth meeting of the IAB. Admiral Souers invited discussion and criticism of the trial issue of ^{the} CIG Weekly Summary circulated a few days earlier. William L. Langer, Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Research and Intelligence, emphasizing that he was "wholly in favor of the undertaking represented by the Weekly Summary," then raised two questions designed to make the new publication stillborn. First, he "wondered" whether interpretive articles, such as those in the Weekly, could be prepared more effectively by CIG or by "specialists in the contributing departments." He then answered his question by stating that the job of interpretation needed to be done by people who have "responsibility and weight." He thought that inevitably the best political comment would be obtained from the political sections of the State Department, where there was responsibility for policy as well as analysis. Langer, who was destined to become the first head of the Office of National Estimates, was sure that CIG could not build up comparably well-informed groups of specialists within its own staff. Therefore, he suggested that articles for the Weekly be prepared by the department experts, leaving the CIG editors to carry out their "true function of correlating political intelligence judgments from State with related

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military judgments from the armed services."

The other edge of Langer's sword was ^{his contention} that it would be a mistake for the CIG Weekly to offer interpretive articles unless it had something "new or novel" to add to the intelligence produced by the departments.

Ludwell Montague, Chief of the Central Reports Staff, responded that the Weekly was not a summary of all the incidents of the week, but an attempt to put into perspective some of the most important incidents and trends. The Weekly was to provide background and depth. He ignored the question of who could do the best analysis, but said that a much greater degree of contact between the CIG staff and departmental specialists was imperative.

Everyone concurred in Gen. Vandenberg's proposal that the Weekly go ahead, and that he be advised when it was found that departmental views had been improperly represented. ¹⁶~~25~~/

The President had directed that CIG "correlate and evaluate" national security intelligence, but no one was quite sure what these functions implied. Whether it was a simple editorial function to put reports in relation to each other and to appraise their value, or whether this was a full-fledged analytical undertaking was not clear in 1946. CIG itself showed a tendency to assume that it was going to have to do original analysis and writing, although it would, of course, have to be careful to be "factual" in the Daily. A proper

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staff would have to be built up to do this work. Throughout 1946 and beyond, however, State fought the idea of having CIG carry on research and analysis.

The top secret Weekly Summary made its first official appearance on 14 June 1946, and was sent to the White House. It had eight dittoed pages carrying six regular articles under the overall heading of Significant Trends, plus one special article. The regular articles ran about a page each and dealt with:

Soviet Propaganda Attacks on the US and UK
Belgian and Dutch Attitudes on Western Germany
The Monarchist Issue in Italy
The Azerbaijan Settlement
Chinese Truce Proves Ineffective
Extremist Tendencies in Java and Sumatra.

The special article, two and a half pages long, was on Yugoslav Military Strength and Capabilities, a timely subject because Belgrade was threatening to use force to solve the Trieste problem.

Soon after taking over CIG, Gen. Vandenberg replaced the Central Reports Staff with the Office of Reports and Estimates (ORE), headed by an officer from the State Department. Montague became chief of ORE's Intelligence Staff and wrote the first estimate produced by the CIG (it was on Soviet policy and was done over a week-end). ¹⁷~~16~~/

CIG had scarcely begun to operate before it became the subject of the investigations, criticisms, and doctrinal debate that were so characteristic of its early years. In

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July 1946 the Office of Collection and Dissemination (OCD) began a study of CIG's daily and weekly summaries to determine if they met the requirements of the President and the other recipients. The report was favorable, but the intelligence community had a group called the Interdepartmental Coordinating and Planning Staff (ICAPS), headed by a man from State. He used OCD's survey to criticize ORE and recommend new programs beyond the capabilities of its small staff.¹⁸~~17~~

On 29 January 1947, Montague replied in a memorandum, disputing the critic's contention that the survey discovered serious deficiencies in the Daily Summary. He said this interpretation did not square with the OCD report and particularly with "the expressions of satisfaction and appreciation attributed therein to the President, Admiral Leahy, the Secretary of War, the Secretary of the Navy, General Eisenhower, and Admiral Nimitz. Actually the findings of the survey were extremely gratifying."¹⁹~~18~~

Montague ^{opposed}~~supported~~ the idea, evidently suggested by the ICAPS chairman, of several daily summaries on different levels, or of a summary for the President only. He said his staff was unable to distinguish between the interests of the President and those of the Secretaries of State, War and Navy.

ICAPS had suggested a radical alteration in the Weekly Summary to make it a synopsis of current events. Montague

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replied that the Weekly was "of a higher order of endeavor." It was established as an essential supplement to the Daily to serve the President and the NIA by selectively treating the most significant developments and analyzing them in perspective, particularly with regard to their probable consequences. He commented that the OCD survey indicated general approval of the present form of the publication.

The next month (i.e., February) both Montague and his deputy, DeForest Van Slyck, talked to Admiral Foscett, one of President Truman's aides charged with bringing intelligence to his attention. ²⁰~~19~~/ The Admiral reported that the President considered that he personally originated the Daily, that it was well prepared according to his specifications, and that in its present form it satisfied his requirements. Admiral Foscett said that he delivered the Daily Summary to the President as soon as it arrived in the afternoon, along with selected telegrams that did not normally anticipate or duplicate the contents of the Daily. The President took the intelligence with him on leaving his office and read it during the evening. The next morning at 9:15 the President conferred with Admiral Leahy and Admiral Foscett, using the Daily as the basis for their discussion of pending foreign problems.

Although Admiral Foscett marked items of particular interest to the President, he said that Truman usually read the

entire Daily.

Admiral Foskett also marked Weekly articles for the President's attention and said that some pieces were later brought up for discussion. The Weekly in its form at that time was acceptable at the White House.

The next cold blast came not from the outside, but from the DCI himself. On 1 May 1947, Rear Admiral Roscoe H. Hillenkoetter succeeded Gen. Vandenberg and approached his job in a reformist spirit. On 26 June 1947, he said to the tenth meeting of the National Intelligence Authority (Secretary of State Marshall in the chair): "Personally, I feel that these summaries are pretty poor, and we are now endeavoring to make changes in them to increase their value. Any suggestions or ideas to make them better would be warmly received." Admiral Leahy commented that the President was pleased with the contents of the daily summaries, which he read every day, even going so far as to read the cables attached to his copy.

Navy Under Secretary Sullivan said he thought the information in the Weekly Summary was excellently presented. Navy Secretary Forrestal, however, stated that the veracity of the contents of the daily and weekly summaries ought to be beyond question. He said he made this point because a portion of the information in a recent daily had not been correct.

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Hillenkoetter reaffirmed his position that there was great room for improvement. ²¹~~26~~/

The next month the National Security Act, setting up the Defense Department, the National Security Council, and the Central Intelligence Agency was passed. The transformation of the Central Intelligence Group into the Central Intelligence Agency took place on 18 September 1947.

CIA Takes Shape

CIA inherited from CIG the task of correlating, evaluating, and disseminating intelligence. National Security Council Directive (NSCID) No. 1, issued in December, prescribed that the DCI should produce intelligence relating to the national security, "hereafter referred to as national intelligence." Insofar as possible, the DCI should not duplicate the intelligence activities and research of other departments, but should make use of their facilities. The directive called upon the DCI to disseminate national intelligence to the President, the members of the NSC, the chiefs of the community's intelligence services, and such others as the NSC might direct. "Intelligence so disseminated shall be officially concurred in by the Intelligence Agencies or shall carry an agreed statement of substantial dissent." ²²~~21~~/

Of course, by this time the CIA Daily Summary and Weekly Summary had been going to the President for almost two years,

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presumably as national intelligence, but there was no intention to require that they be concurred in by the community. Consequently, NSCID No. 3 of 13 January 1948 defined "current intelligence" in such a way as to imply that community concurrence was not necessary. ²³/~~22~~

Current intelligence is that spot information or intelligence of all types and forms of immediate interest and value to operating or policy staffs, which is used by them usually without delays incident to complete evaluation or interpretation.

The CIA and the several agencies shall produce and disseminate such current intelligence as may be necessary to meet their own internal requirements or external responsibilities. (*Italics added.*)

On this basis, the provision of current intelligence for the President seems to have gone on satisfactorily in the main.

President Truman liked to be briefed in addition to receiving intelligence publications. It is probable that the DCI briefed the President daily on current intelligence from the beginning of CIG. With the passage of the National Security Act in 1947, Admiral Souers returned to Washington as Executive Secretary of the National Security Council. He and Admiral Leahy briefed the President every day on foreign intelligence and Council matters. When Leahy retired in March 1949, Souers assumed full responsibility for these briefings. He was, in effect, administrative assistant to the President for national security affairs. ²⁴/~~23~~

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In the first year of the NSC's existence, Admiral Hillenkoetter as DCI prepared a current intelligence report to be read by the NSC members ahead of each meeting. He would then answer any questions about it. Later this report was submitted only once a month, and in 1950 it was dropped altogether. ²⁵/₂₄

In 1948 one current intelligence problem was identified by the Hoover Commission that was investigating the organization of the executive branch of the Government. Under the Commission, a New York lawyer named Ferdinand Eberstadt headed the Committee on the National Security Organization. John A. Bross and Arthur E. Sutherland of CIA wrote the report on the Agency for the Eberstadt Committee. They noted that the National Security Act charged the Agency with correlating and evaluating intelligence relating to the national security and that this function was performed by daily and other intelligence summaries for the

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President, as well as by estimates of particular situations. They pointed out that in its analytical work, CIA was handicapped by not having access to all relevant information, including the operations of other departments of the US Government. They said that if CIA was to evaluate and correlate adequately, it needed to know the thinking at all policy-making levels. ²⁶~~30~~/ This problem has remained with CIA over the years, although there have been periods--usually brief--when the White House has acted to see that Agency analysts had all the operational and policy information they required.

It was also in 1948 that the committee headed by Allen Dulles looked into the adequacy of the National Security Act and the CIA. The committee, which issued its report on 1 January 1949, was highly critical of the Agency's estimates and even more so of its current intelligence, which it found to be too much weighted on the political side and too dependent on State cables. Like the Secretary of State in 1946, it questioned whether CIA should produce current intelligence at all. However, it did regard CIA as an objective and disinterested agency and the proper producer of estimates "reflecting the coordination of the best intelligence opinion." ²⁷~~32~~/

The intelligence agencies commented on the Dulles report. In papers he gave Admiral Hillenkoetter in August, Park Armstrong, head of State's Office of Intelligence ^{and} Research (OIR), echoed the committee's doubts as to whether the Agency should turn out daily and weekly summaries of events when

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State was already issuing political reviews and other agencies had similar activities. In reply, the interdepartmental Coordination, Operations, and Policy Staff (COAPS) said that the CIA daily and weekly were usurping nobody's functions. If those for whom the publications were designed no longer had use for them, they could be abandoned. No suggestion, however, came that the White House was prepared to do without its CIA publications. ²⁸~~15~~/

In one reaction to the Dulles Committee report, the chief of ORE, Theodore Babbitt, set up within his office a production review subcommittee to appraise the degree of correspondence between ORE's mission and its production. The subcommittee's major conclusion, in a report issued on 19 July 1949, was that there was no basis for such an appraisal because ORE's mission had been too fuzzily defined to permit the planning and operation of an effective production effort. The report made various observations about ORE's publications. It noted that the concept of current intelligence in ORE had broadened from the definition given in NSCID No. 3. By 1949 there was a marked tendency to comment on and evaluate the "spot information" reported, and to make estimates and predictions. The report observed that the Daily Summary, and to some extent the Weekly Summary and a monthly called the Review of the World Situation, were created to meet the needs of high policy levels. However, no close working relationship had developed

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between ORE and the policy-making bodies.

The Weekly, in May 1948, had ceased to be top secret and was held to the secret level to permit a wider distribution. Its function was given as that of evaluating and projecting rather than of straight reporting.

The monthly Review, said the report, was timed to meet the second regular meeting of the NSC_A ^{each month. This publication} ~~it~~ originated in a suggestion of the NSC Executive Secretary. ²⁸~~28~~

Throughout ^{the} ~~that~~ ^{of 1949} summer, State kept trying to get ORE to leave the field of major research to OIR. In State's view, CIA should have only a very small research staff to do estimates. Hillenkoetter held his ground, however, and declared in his progress report at the end of 1949 that the Agency must continue reporting on current developments. ³⁰~~30~~

Comint and Korea

So far in its production of finished current intelligence, CIA had not dealt with communications intelligence (Comint). The State Department had been publishing the daily Diplomatic Summary, giving the text of the politically most interesting intercepts. Certain ORE officers regularly read the Diplomatic Summary and took it into account, although they could not quote it. ³¹~~31~~ Comint in CIA was under the control of the Advisory Council, which maintained a tightly-compartmented Special Center in which a few analysts screened and occasionally commented on intercepts relayed from the

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Army Security Agency and the Navy Security Agency.

In 1947, Knight W. McMahan organized General Division in ORE's Special Center to exploit Comint more fully. Other CIA offices maintained representatives in the Special Center and eventually so did ORE's regional divisions. The analysts of General Division turned out papers, mainly on economic topics, based on Comint. These papers were supplemental to the production of the ORE regional divisions, which used only "collateral," as non-Comint intelligence was called. ~~W~~

McMahan's hope, however, was to produce a Comint weekly written for the DCI, who would use it to brief the President. McMahan liked to say that General Division should think in terms of making the DCI the best informed intelligence chief in town. In explaining his plans to his staff, McMahan said that the weekly he had in mind would be characterized by brevity and clarity. "It is pointless to think or believe that the Director of Central Intelligence or anybody in the White House would read anything that is very long. It has to be something that flashes, and we have got to be very highly selective as to what we put in it." McMahan said the principle underlying the selection of material for the weekly should be "to identify, clarify, and interpret the policy of foreign governments as it impinges upon the formation and execution of US policy." ³²~~32~~/

In the spring of 1950 General Division's weekly was launched,

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received favorable comment in ORE, and presumably was sent to the DCI. This effort soon underwent modifications when international events created new problems and demands for intelligence.

On 24 June the Communists launched their attack on South Korea. James C. Graham, the Korean analyst in ORE, immediately began attending the daily Pentagon teleconference with the US military in Tokyo and writing up a summary of the information gleaned. President Truman then asked for a special Korean report, so from 2 July Graham's summary was done as a two-page memorandum, signed by DCI Hillenkoetter, and sent in two copies to the White House and one copy to the FBI. This publication became the Daily Korean Summary after Gen. Bedell Smith became DCI in October 1950. When the Office of Current Intelligence (OCI) was set up in January 1951, the publication was rechristened the Korean Daily Bulletin and it then included Comint for the first time. It continued to be produced until ^{Truman left office} ~~the Korean War ended~~ in January 1953.

In 1950, the Comint available on the Korean situation was published in General Division's weekly, recast and renamed the Situation Summary. ^{This publication} ~~It~~ contained mainly military intelligence, [redacted]

[redacted] The Situation Summary did not confine itself to Korea, but reported whatever was new with respect to Communist capabilities and intentions throughout the world.

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The fear in Washington was that the Communists were likely to strike in other places. The first issue of the SitSum, as it was usually called, was dated 14 July 1950, and consisted of eight pages of text dittoed on white, letter-sized paper. Each page dealt with a different region of the world. Among the week's findings, in essence, were these:

1. Far North - Alaska: Air activity in the Far North has increased coincident with the extension of several airfields in the area.
2. Korea and North China: The arrival of a Chinese Communist diplomatic mission in Pyongyang may be significant in view of possible Chinese participation in Korean operations. There is a major re-deployment northward of Chinese Communist forces, including the crack Fourth Field Army, under "the able command of Lin Piao."
3. Formosa, Philippine Islands, Southeast Asia: The best information indicates that Chinese Communist material support to the Viet Minh forces in Indochina is small.
4. Tibet: Chinese Communist officials continue to announce their determination to "liberate" Tibet.
5. Iran, Afghanistan, and the Caucasus: There are increased maneuvering and firing exercises by Soviet security forces along the frontier. Soviet capabilities would permit the initiation of major operations against Iran or Turkey without further obvious preparations.
6. Yugoslavia, the Balkans, Turkey and Greece: There are indications of prospective Soviet overt or subversive operations against Yugoslavia, Turkey, and Greece.
7. Czechoslovakia, Poland, East Germany and Western Europe: The Soviets have maintained pressure on West Berlin by interfering with transportation, mail, electric power, and water supply.

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8. Finland and Scandinavia: Finnish-Soviet relations appear to be greatly improved.

Soviet fishing vessels arrived off Iceland about a month before the normal start of the fishing season.

McMahan had told his staff a few months earlier:

The situation is internationally as dark as a cave, and no one has been able to clarify it. We don't understand this problem of our epoch and we are frightened by the strain and tension that it puts us under. All I can say is that calmness must be maintained despite tension, objectivity despite emotion, and tenacity despite the weariness of frustration.

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In January 1950 Souers resigned as Executive Secretary of the NSC and was succeeded by his deputy, James Lay. Souers was appointed a special consultant to the President and continued to attend all NSC meetings. By early 1950, Rear Admiral Robert L. Dennison, the President's naval aide, had direct responsibility for intelligence. Throughout the Korean War, Lay and Dennison briefed the President every day from the CIA Daily Summary, State's black book, and Comint. It was Lay's task also to post the President on NSC business. In July, Truman gave Lay the additional job of being chairman of the Senior Staff, which reviewed and perfected papers to be presented to the Council. Because of his daily contact with the President, Lay was in a position to know what the President wanted with respect to problems before the Council. ³³~~32~~/

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Bedell Smith Reorganizes Things

Gen. Walter Bedell Smith became the fourth Director of Central Intelligence on 7 October 1950, and inaugurated the first period of great change in the Agency. Smith had asked William Harding Jackson, one of the ^{members} authors of the 1948 Dulles Survey Group, to be his deputy. Jackson had agreed on the condition that Smith put into effect the recommendations of the Survey Group. It will be recalled that the Group was more than doubtful about the appropriateness of producing current intelligence in CIA; the interest of the Dulles Group lay in revamping and improving the production of estimates. It was no surprise, then, that in little over a month after assuming office, Gen. Smith dissolved ORE and set up the Office of National Estimates. At the same time, he reorganized ORE's economists as the Office of Research and Reports.

Theoretically, the advent of Smith and Jackson foreshadowed the end of current intelligence activity in CIA. Actually, because of demands from the White House and the pressure of international events, CIA not only carried on with current intelligence, but, ironically, created a new office charged specifically with this function.

The Agency was still obligated to produce the Daily Summary for President Truman, and the Korean War sustained a general interest in current intelligence. ^{With Mr. Truman in the White House} It would have been impossible to drop the Korean Daily as long as the hostilities continued. For a time, Smith and Jackson thought current intelligence could be handled as a small support operation within the new Office of National Estimates. In fact a staff for this purpose was set up by R. Jack Smith; it took over the production of the Daily Summary in November 1950. However, the first Assistant Director for National Estimates, William L. Langer, did not like this arrangement. He wanted his office to concentrate completely on estimates, so he was willing for current intelligence production to be assigned elsewhere.

This situation coincided with two other factors:

(1) that with the break-up of ORE, General Division, which was responsible for Comint in the Agency, no longer had a home, although it was still producing the current intelligence Situation Summary, and (2) the main group of ORE's country analysts were sitting high and dry without an assignment. Through a long series of meetings and planning sessions, mainly in December, the logical conclusion was reached to

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put together all the elements--General Division and ORE analysts, Comint, and the responsibility for producing the current intelligence publications--in a new Office of Current Intelligence.

On 4 January 1951, shortly before the formal launching of OCI, W. Park Armstrong, chief of State's Office of Intelligence and Research, visited the Agency to hear from William H. Jackson and Lyman B. Kirkpatrick, Jr., Executive Assistant to the Director, about CIA's current intelligence plans. James Q. Reber, the Acting Assistant Director for Intelligence Coordination, was present and reported on the meeting. Kirkpatrick explained that the Agency wanted its new office to develop a strong, presidential daily to replace the Daily Summary, which was regarded as inadequate.

Kirkpatrick wanted to know whether the State Department would supply its highly sensitive cables to the new office as it had to the Publications Division of ORE. Armstrong endorsed the idea of a new daily for the President and recognized the Agency's need for the sensitive cables, not only from State but also from the Pentagon. However, he stressed the need for CIA to provide the same security as in the past for this traffic. He said it was very important that many of the cables be seen by only a very few people, as was the case in State itself. Armstrong conceded that,

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to be meaningful, the daily would on occasion have to include material on US operations and policy, but he felt it would be hazardous for the Agency to try to summarize these matters as a regular thing³⁴. ~~32~~/ This conversation seems significant in view of the fact that the new CIA daily, which was begun the next month, did not report on US operations and policies, as the old Daily Summary had. State's position appears to have been accepted by the new CIA leadership.

The question of the "inadequacy" of the Daily Summary is a curious one, in light of the repeated expressions of satisfaction from the White House. Just as curious is the conversation on this subject at the same meeting with Armstrong on 4 January. There was a brief discussion of the "problem" of making a change "because of the President's wishes as they have been understood in the past." It was the consensus that the best approach would be to develop the kind of summary "that the DCI thought was proper and useful and merely indicate to the President that this was an effort to improve his summary." This all sounds as though the intelligence people for some reason intended to depart from the President's guidelines. What innovation did they think they were making? Was it the dropping of operational and policy information for the most part? There is no answer in the record on this point.

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Kingman Douglass, who had previously held high positions in CIG, was named the first Assistant Director for Current Intelligence. This new office formally came into being on 15 January 1951 and early the next month began turning out dry runs on the new daily publication. The planning and experimental work went rapidly, and on 28 February 1951 OCI was able to disseminate officially the first issue of the Current Intelligence Bulletin, which replaced the old Daily Summary. Like the original issue of the Summary, which had also first appeared in February five years before, the new CIB had six items. The approach, however, was bolder-- comments as well as gists were offered, although the two elements were clearly differentiated. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

In this issue the first of two items under a General heading was to the effect that the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] many of General MacArthur's ideas, including that of rearming Japan, were being progressively adopted. The other item dealt with the British sale of lead to the USSR coincident with Britain's trying to replenish its stocks from the US. There were two Far Eastern

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pieces: North Korea had completed mine-laying operations in Wonsan bay despite UN bombardment; and the Philippines government favored a broad Pacific regional defense pact that provided also for economic and social cooperation. The one West European item reported a West German Social Democrat as saying that his party would flatly oppose the Schuman Plan (for a coal-steel community) and that he doubted whether Chancellor Adenauer would submit it to the Bundestag. OCI correctly commented that Adenauer would submit the plan and that it would be ratified. The single East European piece reported that with the arrest of former Czechoslovakian foreign minister Clementis, a Titoist movement had been uncovered in the Czech Communist Party.

On 8 March, President Truman, who was vacationing in Key West, wrote Gen. Smith some lines which used to be well-known in OCI. He said, "I have been reading the Intelligence Bulletin and I am highly impressed with it. I believe you have hit the jackpot with this one." ^(Figure 1) 35/ At the end of the next month, Smith told Douglass that the CIB seemed to be exactly what was required. Its recipients, besides the President, were the Secretaries of State and Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, the Chiefs of Staff of the Army and the Air Force, and the Chief of Naval Operations.

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

U. S. Naval Station,
Key West, Florida,
March 8, 1961.

Dear Bedel:

I have been reading the
Intelligence Bulletin and I am
highly impressed with it.

I believe you have hit
the jackpot with this one.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Harry Truman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

General Walter B. Smith,
Director, Central Intelligence Agency,
Washington 25, D. C.

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The early issues of the CIB make interesting reading. They reflect the nervous international atmosphere of the early Cold War period. Reports were rife of the wildest kinds of action, from coups to parachuting of terrorists to outright military invasions. Almost anything seemed possible in those days, and because in fact it was, the President had to be forewarned. Consequently, the contents of the 1951 CIB seem a good deal more exciting and ominous than the typical contents of the ^{publication} ~~daily~~ twenty or more years later.

An example of what the CIB felt had to be dealt with seriously was that Stalin had sent letters to the leaders of the French and Italian Communist parties, Duclos and Togliatti, saying that war was "almost inevitable" and that the Communists must be prepared to mobilize the masses. The CIB pointed out that there was no confirmation of the existence of the Stalin letters. A late item was added to the same issue to convey the views of Charles Bohlen and a French official, who thought the letters "unusual" and possibly intended to leak so as to dispose the West toward concessions ⁱⁿ ~~on~~ a four-power conference.

In Poland, resistance groups cut Soviet communication lines and disposed of five Russian soldiers, who vanished

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without a trace. The Yugoslavs were reported to be fearful of an attack by the Soviet satellites, and rumors of Soviet troop concentrations on the border had created great unrest among the Yugoslav people.

This general state of things in Eastern Europe and the Balkans accounts for the high volume of reporting on Albania. There were usually only half a dozen items in the CIB each day and one or two of these normally dealt with the Korean War. It is therefore remarkable that from 14 March to 1 April there were six Albanian items. Together they told a story of internal strife in the Albanian government, in which, then as in 1973, Enver Hoxha was the premier and Mehmet Shehu was his heir apparent. The disagreements coincided with the growing number of Soviet civilians and military in Albanian posts. Divisions were accentuated by the adoption of a harsh law against terrorist activities, following the bombing of the Soviet legation. At this time, Albanian emigre groups in Italy were parachuting armed men and dropping propaganda leaflets into Albania. The Yugoslav government was worried that the problems in Tirana would furnish a pretext for Soviet armed intervention in the Balkans. Izvestia was already charging that the US was sponsoring Operation Lightning, a planned

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attack by the Turks, Greeks, and Yugoslavs on Albania. This allegation could be an excuse for actions that Moscow intended to take.

One CIB item that prompted President Truman to ask for further details concerned President Juan Peron's claim on 24 March 1951 that Argentina had produced atomic energy by a method unknown to other countries and much cheaper than the methods used by the US, UK, and USSR. He implied that Argentina had succeeded in making atomic energy without uranium. The CIB commented that "it is highly unlikely that Argentina has made new discoveries in atomic production." It was conjectured that Peron was trying to enhance Argentina's stature at the Inter-American foreign ministers' meeting and distract attention from the closing of La Prensa. Peron's claims were based on work done by a fraudulent scientist named Ronald Richter, who had talked Peron into building him a pilot plant. It was three years before Argentina openly admitted that Richter's project, which cost \$65 million, had failed to produce anything.

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There had not been a general CIA weekly publication since the Weekly Summary died, along with ORE, in the fall of 1950. The Situation Summary, of course, was focussed on indications of hostile Communist activity. Inevitably OCI decided that it should produce a weekly to provide some perspective on current affairs, and in late June the office began dry runs on the project. By 2 August 1951, the product was good enough so that the DCI could allow its official dissemination. This Comint publication appeared as the Weekly Review, although its title was changed two weeks later to Current Intelligence Review.

Perhaps editors in those days thought six items made up a proper introductory issue. In any case, the first issue of OCI's new weekly had six items, as its predecessor, the Weekly Summary, had on its first appearance in 1946. Strangely, the new publication was not as attractive looking as the old weekly, mainly because it used the smaller, elite type instead of the larger IBM bold face. The table of contents of the new weekly, unlike the old one, carried not only the titles of the articles, but also summaries of two or three sentences each. This practice was to prevail in OCI's weekly until 1971.

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In the 14-page issue of 2 August the articles were not grouped regionally, but seemingly were arranged in order of importance. The general message of the articles gives an idea of the times.

The first article reported that the Peiping government had executed more than 500,000 people in less than six months in a campaign against "counter-revolutionaries" to intimidate the Chinese people. Several million people were expected to become victims in the next few years.

Britain is trying to create an international defense organization for the Middle East, to be composed initially of the UK, US, France, and Turkey. This plan was viewed by OCI as a British effort to maintain its paramount position in the area despite the UK's limited resources.

The East European Satellites are making a significant contribution to the economic war potential of the USSR. On the other hand, the unavailability of some important raw materials makes the Satellites dependent on Western imports.

The Soviet Orbit is getting a lot of strategic commodities through Czech and Hungarian clandestine trade with the West, especially Britain.

The US-UK draft treaty of peace with Japan, made public on 12 July, has provoked strong opposition in some countries, but it is likely that all 46 non-Communist nations invited to the peace conference in San Francisco will attend.

The government of Panama is slowly responding to US efforts to prevent Panamanian flag vessels from engaging in trade with Communist China.

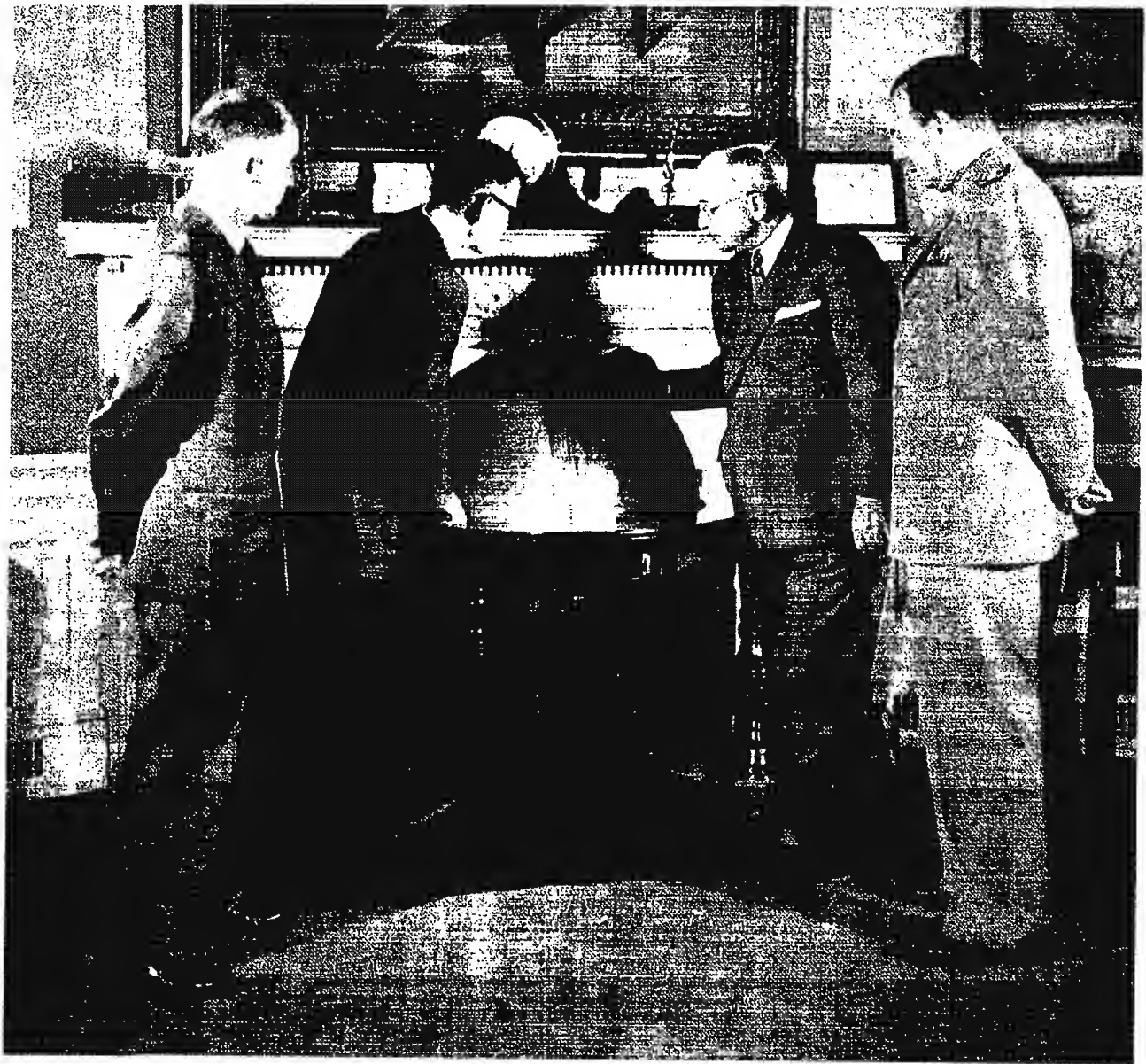
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As in earlier years, President Truman wanted not only publications but also briefings from CIA. The Korean War had caused the President to increase the frequency of NSC meetings and to chair them personally. Gen. Omar Bradley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, opened the Thursday meetings with a briefing on the military situation in Korea. Then Bedell Smith briefed on new intelligence in general, and on intelligence relating to the subject the NSC was considering that day. ³⁶~~35~~/

The next day, the President alone was briefed in his office by Gen. Smith, Adm. Souers, and, occasionally, James Lay. ^(Figure 2) At these sessions, Gen. Smith was able to give his personal appraisal of the Korean military situation, a subject he avoided at the NSC meetings. ³⁷~~35a~~/ His briefing material was prepared by Meredith P. Davidson of General Division's Indications Branch, which after January 1951 was part of OCI. With the aid of OCI analysts, Davidson each week put together for the Director a black, loose-leaf briefing book that had "For the President" stamped on the cover in gold. This book contained the latest figures on Communist military strength, the Situation Summary, the Watch Committee report, the , any memoranda the President had asked for, and separate items of information that the Director and Davidson thought the

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Personnel with James Lay, Gen. W. B. Smith and
F. Gu. 2 Hon. Adm. Robert L. Dennison
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President would be interested in. After it was begun in August 1951, the OCI Current Intelligence Review was included in the President's material. The Director always took with him a detailed order-of-battle map of Korea. After the briefing, the President kept the black book for reference until it was exchanged for the new one the next week.

Occasionally material from the clandestine side of the Agency would be added to the black book. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The President's briefing was usually at 10 o'clock. Early that morning, Davidson would himself be briefed on the latest developments by OCI's Melvin Hendrickson and Hubert Plumpe. Then Gen. Smith and Davidson would ride to the White House, with Davidson relaying interesting points to the Director on the way.*

The Deputy DCI, Allen Dulles, discharged the briefing function in Gen. Smith's absence. At those times, a group of analysts and supervisors from OCI would first brief Dulles, setting the pattern that Dulles would follow when he became DCI in 1953. For example, on 28 March 1952,

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Dulles was briefed by Knight McMahan, Waldo Dubberstein, Melvin Hendrickson, [REDACTED] on a number of subjects: British plans to withdraw troops from Egypt, riots in Teheran, reports that the French were having success in their push against the Viet Minh, and the Communist allegation that the UN forces were using BW in Korea. On his way to the White House, Dulles commented that it was more than a pleasure to be briefed by such a group. After the meeting with the President, Dulles said Truman thoroughly enjoyed the results of the investigation into Communist BW charges

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among front line units in Korea. The "evidence" that the UN capitalists were spreading germ-laden insects turned out to be fertilizer. 38/

On behalf of the DDI and the Director, Davidson often had to make arrangements with the White House, or solve problems relating to intelligence service. In July 1952, Admiral Dennison, who briefed the President about 10 o'clock on most days, found himself handicapped because OCI's Daily Korean Bulletin arrived in the White House between 10:30 and noon. This meant that the Admiral had to make a special trip back to the President each day. The Admiral explained his problem to Gen. Smith, who instructed those responsible to "at any cost get this daily bulletin into Admiral Dennison's hands by 0950 each morning." In investigating this matter in OCI, Davidson discovered that the preparation of the bulletin was wholly dependent on the telecon between the Pentagon and Tokyo beginning at 0700 each day. At times, this conference was delayed because of technical conditions, thereby throwing production off schedule. The analyst, in any case, had an average of 35 minutes to write the bulletin based on the telecon. In view of these facts, Davidson could only ask OCI to shave every possible minute off the bulletin operation so that the report could be delivered to Admiral Dennison as close to 0950 as possible. Davidson arranged to

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have a car and driver standing by at 0915 daily to rush the report to the White House. ³⁶~~35~~/

OCI briefed not only the President in 1952, but also the next President even before the election. President Truman decided during the summer that he wanted the candidates of both parties well-posted on foreign developments both to prepare them for office and to keep foreign policy out of the campaign as much as possible. Accordingly, it fell to OCI's Melvin Hendrickson to brief Gen. Dwight Eisenhower four times from late August to late October, and to Meredith Davidson to give Gov. Adlai Stevenson an identical set of briefings. Hendrickson saw the General both at his Morningside Heights home and on the campaign trail; Davidson always briefed at the Governor's mansion in Springfield. The TOP SECRET briefings were contained in spiral-bound EYES ONLY covers and dealt with the leading world subjects of interest to the US--the Korean and Indochinese conflicts, instability in important countries like Iran, the situation in Communist states, NATO, developments in the German and Austrian problems, etc. The Director had particularly interesting estimates and special memoranda, signed by Sherman Kent, inserted into the books. On the occasion

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of the first briefing at his house, Eisenhower read the briefing book, and then, commenting on French troubles in North Africa, remarked that "If the French don't do something fairly soon, they will have another Indochina on their hands." On the campaign train from Silver Spring to Baltimore about a month later, the General's reaction to the briefing was, "This certainly presents a picture of a gradually deteriorating situation all over the world. Sometimes I wonder if it has gone beyond a point from which it can be retrieved." At the last session on the train from Harmon to Grand Central Station, N. Y., Eisenhower said the briefings had been very helpful but that he missed the G-3 (Plans) information, which he said was essential for a complete understanding. ⁴⁰
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Stevenson was complimentary about the first briefing but asked no substantive questions. At the second session, he said that the perspective obtained from the world-wide report was of "inestimable value," and he pronounced the situation in North Africa "most disturbing." The third meeting turned into a "fast-moving 'bull session,'" with Stevenson asking many penetrating questions about Kashani and Mossadeq in Iran, the Korean truce talks, and the ambitions of Chiang Kai-Shek. Davidson gave his reading on all these questions, but was careful to point out that he was not speaking for his office. ⁴¹
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CIA continued its briefings after the election of November. President-elect Eisenhower rested for some time out of public view. He then appeared at a function in Baltimore, after which he took a train to Washington. Bedell Smith and Meredith Davidson got on the train in Baltimore and Smith briefed Eisenhower not only during the journey, but until after midnight as the car sat in the Washington terminal.


The President-elect had his headquarters in the Commodore Hotel in New York, and CIA established a temporary office there in charge of [redacted] Chairman of the OCI Publications Board. [redacted] received all of OCI's current intelligence output and was prepared to deliver it to Eisenhower each day. It turned out, however, that the President-elect did not want written briefings, but oral ones including G-3 information on Korea that OCI could not get. As a consequence, Gen. Smith himself briefed the President-elect. This arrangement thus anticipated that which prevailed throughout the eight years of the Eisenhower administration.

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General Ike in the White House

Every President has his own ways of doing things and his own preferences about how he wants to be served. Dwight Eisenhower, as a military man, was used to large staff meetings and formal briefings. When he took over the Presidency on 20 January 1953, he did not want intelligence publications nor did he feel the need for a private weekly intelligence briefing from the DCI. He wanted to get his foreign intelligence for the most part from the DCI's briefing that led off the regular weekly meeting of the National Security Council. He put Allen Dulles at the head of CIA, making Gen. Smith Under Secretary of State.

Huntington D. Sheldon, who was the Assistant Director for Current Intelligence throughout the eight Eisenhower years, has described the working of the briefing system.  Thursday was the standard day for the NSC meeting. The previous day the intelligence community had acted on the week's estimates and the Watch Committee report. Consequently, as Sheldon says, "the full force of the previous week's developments had been pretty well thrashed out on a community basis," and the Director felt

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that he could speak more or less for the community, rather than just for CIA.

The agenda for each meeting was prepared by the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council, James S. Lay, Jr., under the direction of the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, Gen. Robert Cutler. ~~(Cutler was succeeded in 1958 by Gordon~~

~~Smith)~~ Each week Lay would let Dulles know how much time he would have for his briefing and whether there were particular topics that the President or Cutler wanted covered. If there were not, CIA would come up with its own suggestions and check them out through Lay. "We worked very closely with Jimmy Lay throughout that whole period," Sheldon comments.

The preparation of the briefing for Dulles to give was the responsibility of OCI, which wrote most of the material and coordinated the rest. Each Monday, Sheldon met with his principal assistants in OCI--staff and division chiefs--to discuss the week's briefing topics. Assignments were made and passed on to the analysts. On Tuesday, the draft briefing notes were edited and then reviewed by Sheldon. He next went to a meeting on them in the Director's office, usually accompanied by the Deputy Director for Intelligence, Robert Amory, Jr., and the

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Assistant Director for National Estimates, Sherman Kent. The Office of National Estimates would frequently contribute a summary of a new estimate to the Director's briefing. In any case, Kent would not have any hesitancy about expressing disagreement with OCI's material and making suggestions for change. A discussion would ensue, and often disagreements were referred to the Director. Even in the absence of disagreements, Dulles would have his own suggestions. On Wednesday, the necessary modifications would be made in the papers and then Sheldon, the DDI, and the appropriate analysts would see Dulles to get his final approval. Early Thursday, any updating would be accomplished, and then the briefing notes would be taken to the DDI, who would pass them on to the Director. Any needed graphics and graphics crewmen went along.

Sheldon was the coordinator of the material for the Director's briefing. If there were aspects of the briefing that OCI itself was unable to produce, e.g., a scientific paper, it was usually up to OCI to be sure that the required material was, in fact, produced and that it fit into the general scheme of things. Frequently, OCI helped other offices in the preparation of graphic aid, because OCI's graphics shop was geared to produce

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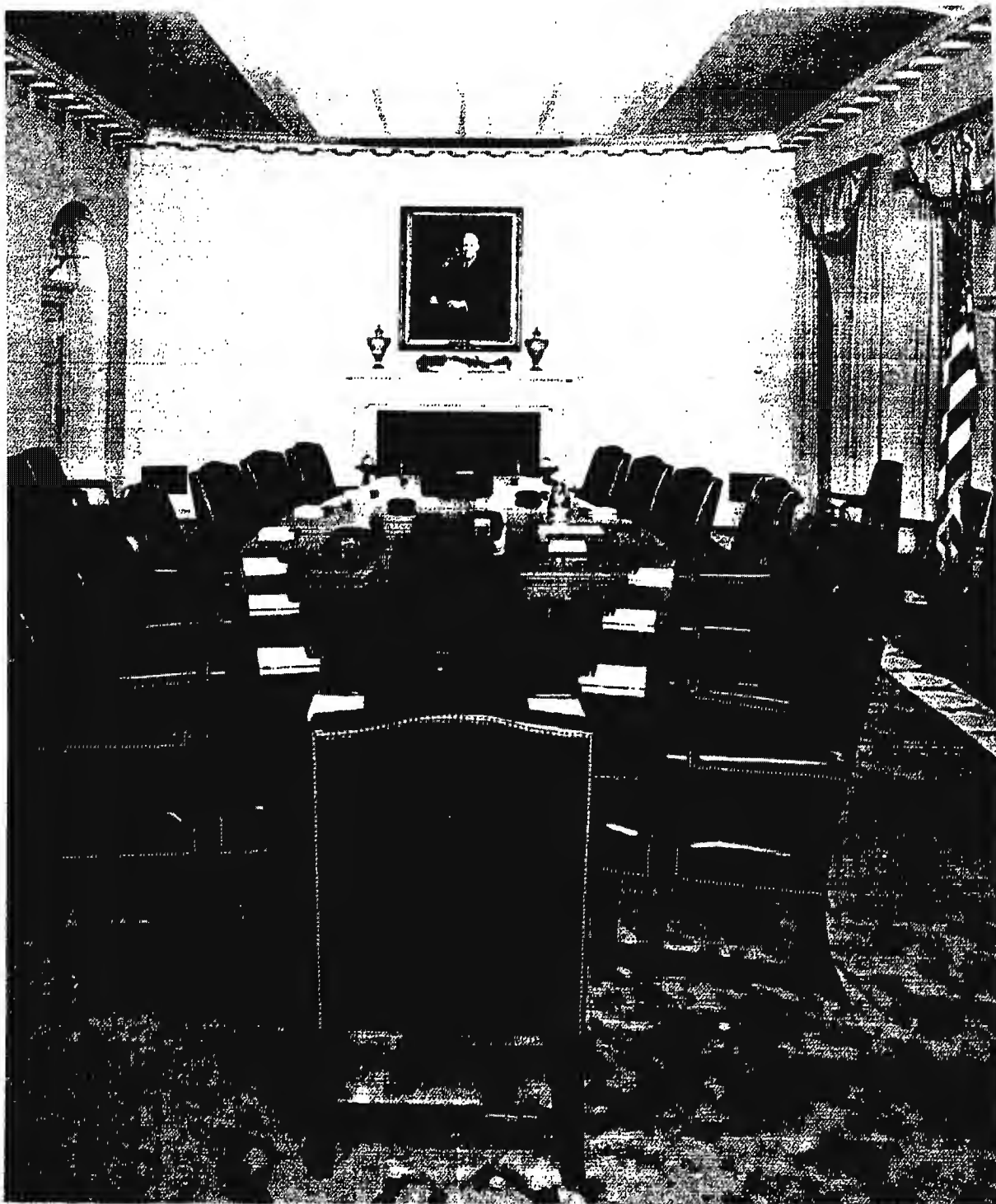
quickly the kind of thing the Director liked to use and the NSC was accustomed to seeing.

About 8:15 on Thursday morning, Sheldon and the graphics man would climb the steep wooden staircase from Q Building and walk across the Agency's central square to East Building, where they would meet the Director at his limousine. If the chart boards were not too big, everyone would get into the one car. Otherwise, a second car would have to be employed to carry the graphics. The team would plan to arrive at the White House about 10 minutes ahead of the 9 o'clock briefing time to get things ready. Everyone had a White House pass so there was no delay about getting into the grounds. On arrival at the West wing, the Director would get out of the car and go right to the Cabinet Room, Sheldon would wait and make sure the graphics man was getting along all right. The graphics man would take his boards to the Cabinet Room and set them on the easel that stood near the fireplace. He would then wait outside the room.

The big table in the room, dating from Franklin Roosevelt's time, is shaped like a lozenge, with the four points cut off. ^(Figure 3) With his back to the French windows, the President always sits in the center of the table, flanked by the Secretary of State on his right.

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Figure 3 The Cabinet Room in the
White House
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and the Secretary of Defense on his left. The Vice President sits directly opposite the President. In Eisenhower's administration, others around the table were the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; the Secretary of the White House staff; NSC Executive Secretary James Lay; the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, Gen. Robert Cutler; the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission; the Attorney General; and the Director of the Office of Emergency Management. The DCI sat at the end of the table in front of the fireplace (which was never lit) and near the easel.

Jimmy Lay would advise Sheldon as to whether he should be in the room from ^{the} beginning, or await a signal to enter, for sometimes the meetings began with a sensitive topic not connected with intelligence. Sheldon took notes, especially of matters to be followed up, changed the maps or charts if necessary, and helped the Director answer questions. If there ^{were} ~~was~~ no graphics, Sheldon sat in the row of chairs behind the President. Sheldon comments that "the number of times he was drawing Vice President Nixon's face would amaze you."

The proceedings were formal and would normally start with the Director's briefing. Dulles would face the

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President and, in effect, brief him and not the Council as a whole. Dulles would say: "Mr. President, today I want to tell you about a ruckus in the Greek Parliament..." (or whatever the subject was). Usually there were several topics, and mostly the emphasis was on the Communists. As Sheldon puts it: "We were in a really Cold War situation. The Soviet Union was the Enemy, China was the Enemy, Eastern Europe--they all followed the great Communist conspiracy." So the Director always threw what light he could on Soviet and Chinese matters.

Sometimes the President would interrupt with a question, and, if a discussion ensued, others might ask for clarifications. When the President had had enough discussion, he would say, "OK, Allen, let's go ahead." If a question remained unanswered at the end of the meeting, OCI was obligated to dig out the answer and send it in a memorandum to Jimmy Lay for dissemination to the members of the NSC.

The Director always had to brief on foreign elections, and the Council liked the parliamentary pie charts that were customarily worked up. Italian elections seem to have excited particular interest. OCI always had good material on elections, in part because it often sent analysts to the countries involved to get the atmosphere of the campaign.

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Dulles was quite at home with political and economic matters, but he was not comfortable with scientific or military questions. He usually had a specialist give the briefings on these subjects. He would designate the person he wanted to do the job, and this specialist would then rehearse with the DDI and Sheldon to be sure that all parts of the briefing dovetailed, that the material was not too long, and that the language employed was crisp and to the point. Sheldon remarks that he and the DDI "had to point out areas where people will go to sleep if you don't sharpen this up."

The Assistant Director for Scientific Intelligence,
Herbert Scoville, Jr., gave many of the scientific briefings, but in the early days of the Eisenhower administration, the Agency's nuclear specialist was Herb Miller. At that time, few people knew anything of the technical aspect of nuclear weapons, so the expert had a field to himself. Miller "certainly sounded like a real expert; he was very good with words and made an excellent impression."

The DDI, Robert Amory, would from time to time brief on military matters, such as the progress of the battle at Dien Bien Phu. "Of course, the question in those days was whether the US should assist the French to ward off the North Vietnamese, and there were difficult

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questions being decided policy-wise. You know, there were some people who were saying, 'We'll send some nuclear bombs there and we'll settle this thing.'"

Cord Meyer briefed the Council on the Agency's activities in the field of international labor relations and propaganda. People outside of government frequently sent letters to the White House asking why CIA spent so much money on propaganda and wanting to know what Radio Free Europe really was. So about once a year, the White House would ask the Director for a briefing on these matters. In these cases, "there was a lot of detailed data that had to be assembled and gotten across quickly to the meeting (they didn't want to listen to that for more than ten minutes), so you had to sort of rat-a-tat it out in a way, but it had to be meaningful and only someone who had all this stuff at his fingertips would be able to do it effectively." On this kind of assignment, Dulles would always ask Cord Meyer to work with him.

In the NSC briefing arrangement, "playback" was no problem. It was always possible to tell whether the President was interested, satisfied, or bored. Sheldon's summation of the system is that, "The Director got used to the procedure, and was happy with it, and everybody

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was happy with it, and it simply remained that way until the next administration."

Commenting further on this period, Sheldon says that "the Agency's service to the White House in intelligence was very regular, very full, and a great amount of effort was expended by the Agency as a whole and OCI in particular. The DDI was devoted to making these presentations in support of the Director and the President as effective and valuable to them as was possible."

Although the principal means of furnishing current intelligence to President Eisenhower turned out to be the NSC briefing, OCI from the first tried to interest the President in its regular production. On the day after the inauguration in 1953, Sheldon sent the NSC's Jimmy Lay a list of the publications it could furnish the White House. It was apparent before long, however, that the President did not want to post himself on foreign developments by reading CIA's finished reports, but by being briefed. It became OCI's role to see that the men around the President responsible for intelligence matters and national security affairs were kept informed and were in a position to brief the President when they had a chance. Col., later Gen., Paul T. Carroll had this

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task and when he died suddenly it devolved upon Col., later Gen., Andrew Goodpaster. Goodpaster's title was Secretary of the White House staff, but his job was to handle day-to-day business relating to national security.

Early in March 1953, Sheldon and DDI Loftus E. Becker discussed the idea of producing a very brief, all-source publication exclusively for the President. This did not materialize, however, and Sheldon now says he believes the reason was that Eisenhower was hesitant about having something tailored for his private consumption. He may have felt that the producers of such a paper would be less objective than they would be in a publication for general circulation, and might slant items. The time for a purely presidential daily was not ripe until eight years later.

Eisenhower did accept one written intelligence product, and strangely enough this fact remained unknown to OCI until the President was about to leave office. At that time, the President gave his son, Maj. John Eisenhower, the Award of Merit for his services in current intelligence. It seems that John Eisenhower was the first of Goodpaster's several assistants and was specifically assigned to subjects that came to the White House from the State and Defense Departments, the AEC, and CIA. ⁴³~~30~~/ In this

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capacity, he apparently wrote capsule versions of OCI articles he thought his father would be interested in. He must have been the person responsible for "the intelligence digest prepared in my office," to which the President makes reference in his autobiography. ~~44~~⁴⁴

To keep the whole White House staff, rather than only the national security and intelligence people, knowledgeable about foreign developments and their significance, OCI began in 1953 to present briefings for Sherman Adams, chief of the White House staff, and his assistants. These were usually done every other week. When a situation of interest to the US had developed to where it was lively and topical, OCI would present an authoritative, in-depth report on a secret level. Sheldon would arrange the topics with Jimmy Lay or Gen. Cutler, and a considerable effort went into making the presentations successful. The briefings were given for a while by analysts specializing in the subjects discussed, but were later taken over by a regular team of briefers. This program helped to keep up the information level of the White House staff, which as Sheldon says, didn't have time to follow foreign topics in the newspapers.

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A new presidential service begun by OCI in Eisenhower's time, and ~~later~~ ^{from then on} continued, was that of cabling intelligence to the President when he was travelling abroad. This operation required extensive and detailed planning by Sheldon and Goodpaster. They had to decide at which points on the route it would be useful for Goodpaster, who accompanied the President on these trips, to receive a cable. In each place, the messages from headquarters would be handcarried to Goodpaster [redacted]

[redacted] The general content of the messages would have to be planned in advance, taking account of the President's particular interests, the probable situation with which he would be confronted at each stop, and whether the President would want "a big slice of pie or a small one," i.e., a meaty or short briefing. Each cable, of course, would carry important current intelligence from anywhere in the world.

A task force was set up in OCI for each trip to monitor the intelligence traffic for material of interest to the President and to prepare the special cable, usually sent daily. When the trip was over, Goodpaster would give Sheldon a rundown on what he had shown the President and what he had not been able to

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show him for one reason or another. Sheldon comments that the system worked well and that "This indeed was a very satisfactory relationship."

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The Days of JFK

Huntington D. Sheldon has^{also} provided an account of the current intelligence relationship with the White House during the first year and a half of the administration of John F. Kennedy. Within two weeks of the inauguration in 1961, Allen Dulles invited the new President to come to the Agency and listen to its officials explain how they thought they could help him. All the members of the Director's executive group were called upon to prepare brief statements of their functions and the practical uses thereof from the standpoint of the White House. Sheldon was present to outline the situation with respect to current intelligence. He explained what the publications were and, in general, what the strengths and weaknesses of substantive intelligence were in various areas. He asked how the President wished the Agency to serve him in this particular field.

Kennedy responded that he would like to have the publications available to him. He designated his military aide, Brig. Gen. Chester V. Clifton, who was present at the meeting, to be the contact for current intelligence, and said that Clifton would let the Agency know in a few days just how he

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would like things handled on a daily basis. It developed that the best method would be for Sheldon to take the publications and other papers directly to the White House every day and maintain close contact with the President's aides.

Consequently, every day at 8:30 Sheldon would present his pass at the White House and proceed to the office of Bromley Smith, who had succeeded Jimmy Lay as Executive Secretary of the NSC. Smith's office ^{on the bottom floor of the West Wing} was the central point to which intelligence from all sources was directed. Gen. Clifton's office, as is usually the case with military aides, was in the East wing of the White House, but Clifton did not keep highly classified material there. Instead he had a safe in Bromley Smith's office, where Sheldon would meet him whether Smith was there or not.

Each day Sheldon and Clifton would go over the Central Intelligence Bulletin, usually marking the most important items with a red pencil, and Sheldon would deal with any questions Clifton had. Clifton would usually hand back the previous day's CIB with any comments he felt appropriate. Sheldon also brought ~~to~~ Clifton sensitive cables and other documents he thought the President might want to see, as well as photographs, charts, and maps in some cases. This

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turned out to be the sort of service Kennedy wanted. Normally, it was Gen. Clifton who took CIA's material to the President.

Next to his office Smith had established an International Situation Room, equipped with press services tickers. It was the responsibility of the OCI Watch Office, under a Senior Intelligence Duty Officer, to call the White House Situation Room to make sure it was aware of major news developments, and to alert the White House to important classified information that might have to be passed to the President.

The President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, McGeorge Bundy, also had his office next to Bromley Smith's. Frequently Gen. Maxwell Taylor, the President's special advisor on military affairs, would be in Smith's or Bundy's office. Sheldon used to take at least four copies of OCI's publications so that all those interested in intelligence would be taken care of. Gen. Taylor was also a member of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board.

Because Kennedy did not place as much emphasis on the NSC machinery as Eisenhower had, Allen Dulles had few opportunities to present intelligence briefings to the Council. However, when he felt that there were items of particular significance that the President should see, Dulles would prepare memoranda and take them personally to the President. He would operate in this way also when he wanted to bring certain estimates to the President's attention.

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Then came the Bay of Pigs in April. Two or three days after the fiasco, Sheldon was at the White House delivering the publications when Gen. Clifton suggested that they go back to his office in the East wing and have a private discussion. He advised Sheldon of the President's reluctance to carry on receiving intelligence in the normal way. Clifton hinted that there was deep-seated resentment, not necessarily against the Agency as a whole, but against certain elements in the Agency as a result of the Bay of Pigs.

Clifton said in effect that it would be necessary to come up with some entirely different ways of operating if he and CIA were to rekindle the President's interest and remain useful in bringing intelligence to him every day. He suggested that there would have to be a publication with a completely new format for the President only. It could be more broadly based than the groundrules had permitted in the past. The implication was that the publication could carry not only intelligence, strictly defined, but things the President might like to be reminded of and wish to take action on.

Clifton stressed that whatever OCI came up with would have to be short and punchy, and written in a sophisticated way. Sheldon said he would go back to the office, mull this

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over, and see what could be done. Clifton added he wanted this matter kept on a confidential basis. There was no point at this stage in the DCI's getting into any discussions with the President; that would be counterproductive. Sheldon said he would continue to bring down the regular publications for the benefit of those, other than the President, who had been seeing them; Gen. Clifton assented.

Sheldon was obviously in a peculiar position vis a vis the Director and other senior officers in the Agency. He asked for, and obtained, a private session with Dulles and told him how things stood. Dulles reacted in a calm and helpful manner. "I think he appreciated that at least some lifeline to the White House was highly desirable from the point of view of the Agency." Dulles did not say that he wanted to review whatever Sheldon might take to the White House. In effect, he gave Sheldon a free hand to do what he could to be helpful. Sheldon expressed appreciation for the Director's confidence in him and said that he would report any problems the Director should be aware of.

With Dulles's blessing, Sheldon set out to develop a mechanism that would put the Agency back in the graces of the White House. He and a few senior officers in OCI put

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their heads together and began to plan a paper which would be marked "For The President Only." Although formally labelled Top Secret, it would have no restriction as to classification. They worked out a format for a publication that could be read in a few minutes and they hit upon a title--the President's Intelligence Check List, or PICL. They wanted to include attention-getting material, such as summaries of cables on which it was incumbent for some executive department to take action. This was to some extent a return to the practice under Truman of reporting operations ^{in which} the US Government was involved. ~~As~~ As Sheldon remarks: "Unless one's reader is aware of these kinds of cables, he will never properly understand the intelligence that we would be presenting him."

Richard Lehman worked up a dry run issue of the PICL, and when Sheldon thought he had a ^areasonable facsimile of what Clifton had outlined, Sheldon took him a copy just for his personal perusal. Clifton's reaction to the title was favorable, and, although he made a few suggestions, he liked the format because the items were short and snappy and the English was not ponderous. Moreover, while the publication carried material of a higher classification than any previous OCI periodical, it was not littered with classification labels.

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Before Gen. Clifton sought the President's approval, Sheldon set up a special operation to be sure OCI wouldn't stub its toe if it got the green light. Although knowledge of the new daily had to be kept to as few people as possible, the production could not be carried out by just two or three because of the work-load and the range of expertise required. Therefore, Sheldon set up a roster of particularly qualified persons who would be charged on a rotating basis with coming to the office at 3 or 4 in the morning to go over the intelligence take. They would draft items which Sheldon would review when he came in about 5:30. He would edit some, scrub others as not meeting the criteria, and sometimes ask for additional items. In getting the completed book out on time, he had to have "a very rapid and understanding typist." As with the writers, there had to be several typists on a rotating basis because the hours were difficult.

When Sheldon felt he had a workable production technique, he had an issue turned out that could be passed to the President. It was Saturday, 17 June 1961, when Sheldon and Richard Lehman checked with Allen Dulles, then delivered the first issue of the PICL to Gen. Clifton at 1130, later than would ordinarily be the case in the future. President Kennedy was spending the week-end at his Glen Ora country house near Middleburg, Va., and Clifton took the PICL to him there.

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The ^{first} PICL was a small book of seven pages, size 8 1/2 x 8 inches. It contained 14 items of about two sentences each, six notes, and two maps. At the end it was attributed to "The Director of Central Intelligence." The gist of the items was:

1. We believe a special meeting of the Soviet Party Central Committee opened today.
2. After a meeting of Laotian princes in Zurich, Phoumi announced agreement to form a "government of national unity." But the Communists renewed pressure on government forces. (Map)
3. Dominican President Balaguer has eased OAS investigators out of the country.
4. The Philippine Foreign Minister is worried over what he feels is a softening of US policy on Laos.
5. A Soviet ship arrived in Cuba with 18 crates of a kind usually used for shipping MIG-15s and 17s.
6. The French found the Algerians uncompromising at the Evian talks.
7. A Soviet ICBM test at Tyura Tam was aborted.
8. We expect the Soviets to show new types of aircraft and missiles at the Moscow air show next month.
9. Leftist students will try to block Ikeda's departure from Tokyo for the US.
10. The Soviets will deliver two TU-16s to Indonesia.
11.

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12.

13. Because of concern from Commonwealth countries, the British bid for Common Market membership may be delayed.

14. In the Congo, Gizenga is lowering his price for coming to a parliament meeting in Leopoldville. He is having trouble with tribes in the provinces. (Map)

The first PICL had been delivered.

/As Sheldon remarks, "A good deal hung on what the response was going to be." When Sheldon and Lehman delivered the second issue to the White House on the following Monday morning, Clifton said, "Go ahead--so far, so good."

Sheldon then advised Dulles of the developments. The DCI understood that in view of the PICL's production schedule, he could not play a substantive role, but Sheldon asked him to pass on any ideas he had. And, in fact, Dulles did from time to time call to inquire whether certain subjects or incoming reports had been covered. "His whole attitude on this was very helpful."

In a fairly short time, McGeorge Bundy, Bromley Smith and Gen. Taylor, in addition to Gen. Clifton, began to read the PICL. Sheldon took an extra copy for them to read and pass around while he was at the White House.

Sheldon would give the President's copy to Clifton, who would return the previous issue, or sometimes several, if they had backlogged.

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There was immediately great interest in the publication. The President read it, and frequently, as a result, issued instructions to various officials. He also asked for source materials, estimates bearing on items that attracted his attention, texts of speeches, and OCI memoranda giving fuller details and explanations.

Sheldon recalls, "It became apparent from occasional hints that Ted (Gen. Clifton) would let drop that the President had actually used some of our action data to tickle the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense." Inevitably, then, these secretaries asked the White House for copies of what the President was reading. By December Gen. Clifton passed the word to OCI to put the secretaries on the subscriber list.

For the Secretaries of State and Defense, OCI adopted the scheme of having two pouches, which were hand-carried every morning to the designated senior assistant of each secretary. Each day the pouch containing the previous day's PICL was exchanged for the pouch containing the new issue.

Sheldon's feeling is that OCI's performance with the PICL was accepted by the White House with approbation.

I don't remember any criticisms at any time, nor do I recall anybody saying "My word, I didn't

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know you could get this kind of information," because the individuals were quite sophisticated in terms of intelligence capabilities. They had a pretty good knowledge of what could be obtained

[redacted] so they were pretty well on the ball in terms of what they might expect to get, and what they actually got matched up pretty well. I don't think we ever bowled them over by producing something about which they would say, "My heavens, this is really a coup. ~~My heavens~~ Where the dickens did you get this from?"

Occasionally OCI put a little humor into the PICL, a difficult thing to do.

The PICL was supposed to inform and stimulate, and it served those purposes well. In Sheldon's view, the PICL has been the best channel OCI ever had to the President.

In the early months of the PICL enterprise, Sheldon himself went to the White House for the meeting with the President's aides, usually at 8:30. He was accompanied by the analyst who had come in very early in the morning to write the PICL. Eventually the analyst went alone. From the beginning he would put a brief account of the morning's transactions into the log kept by the staff. A typical entry is the following under the date of 20 July 1961:

Sheldon and Lehman to WH at 0830 (seven minutes late because of Bizerte item and general confusion). Clifton and Taylor read book.

[redacted] JFK
greatly concerned over ECM note, charged

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Taylor with looking into it. Taylor called Sheldon, who arranged for Taylor to get same USAF briefing as Watch Committee. ~~28~~ / 45

Perusal of the log turns up points of particular interest. The 27 June issue was "fully read, generated much policy action." For the Fourth of July holiday, the President was at his home in Hyannis Port. On the 3rd, Lehman went there to bring Gen. Clifton the PICL as well as a couple of memoranda, including a Joint Chiefs of Staff report on Kuwait. A follow-up cable arrived from Washington. The President read the material and had no further requests. Thereafter, when the President went to Hyannis Port the PICL was transmitted by cable from the White House Situation Room.

The move of the Agency in September 1961 from its downtown temporary buildings to the new building in Langley, Va., naturally made operations difficult and gave rise to various improvisations. OCI used the Agency's offices at 1717 H St. to turn out the PICL during this period of confusion. For the most part the usual deadlines were met.

OCI soon discovered that it had to be flexible in producing the PICL. At one point it learned that President Kennedy had not had an intelligence briefing for four days, so it put together a combined edition of the PICL, winnowing

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out the items that had faded a bit. In fact, it became the practice for the PICL to repeat important items when it was known that the President had missed an issue.

Before 1961 was out, Gen. Clifton said that the President enjoyed reading the PICL, even when it was longer than usual. Early the next year, Clifton said the President had asked when and how the PICL was produced. Clifton had been instructed to turn up in OCI early one morning to observe the production process. He did this, and was satisfied and impressed.

On 9 January 1962, when [redacted] was at the White House for OCI, Clifton said the President had registered a mild protest that the PICL writers were the purveyors of gloom, implying that they should make an effort to mix in a little more good news. Mr. Kennedy also thought that the DCI should find a way to provide an occasional summary of operational successes. However, John A. McCone, who had succeeded Allen Dullessas Director in November 1961, apparently never chose to use the PICL for operational reporting.

In January 1962, the Laotian struggle was temporarily halted by the agreement of the three princes on a coalition government. It was not long, however, before the truce was broken and Washington was again worried over the situation.

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President Kennedy held a series of conferences on Laos in the White House, some of them officially NSC meetings.

chief of OCI's Southeast Asia Branch, wrote one of the NSC briefings and attended the meeting itself. In the absence of Mr. McCone, the briefing was delivered by Lt. Gen. Marshall Carter, who had just become DDCI. This was one of the rare occasions on which an OCI analyst was present at an NSC meeting. 46/42

Gen. Clifton gave OCI advice and guidance whenever he was aware of anything that would make the PICL more pleasing to the President, and also reported on the President's workload and activities to indicate how much intelligence he might want or have time for. Early in April 1962, Clifton reported that

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things were "scrambled" in the White House and that the President's preoccupation with the steel crisis made it almost impossible to get his attention, even "with a full-scale nuclear war." Nonetheless, Mr. Kennedy had taken policy actions on the basis of some PICL pieces. For one thing, he had moved to head off a visit to Cuba by Algerian leader Ben Bella.

Some weeks later Clifton made several suggestions to OCI. The PICL had been using "talking captions," i.e., extremely brief headlines under the country name for each item. Clifton asked that these captions be dropped in favor of simply making the point of the piece in the opening sentence. On another occasion OCI was asked to put a summary of the Watch Committee report in the PICL each week.

In June Clifton "reminded" James Featherstone of OCI that actions taken by US Government departments in foreign situations should be reflected in PICL items. This philosophy harked back to President Truman's desire to have the whole picture.

The PICL Established

In reviewing support for the White House after the PICL had been in operation for a year, Richard Lehman, Assistant for Special Projects in OCI, noted that though the publication

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was a more satisfactory vehicle for serving the President than anything previously attempted, it still had shortcomings. One of them was that OCI received later than the White House, or did not receive at all, ^{some material} of which the President ~~needed to~~ be aware. It was therefore necessary for the President's staff to supplement the PICL with intelligence from other sources. ⁴⁷/₂₆

Gen. Clifton said that if he found that the CIB's coverage of a story had useful details not in the PICL, he would add them into the President's report. Clifton, Bromley Smith, and McGeorge Bundy also made use of OCI's Current Intelligence Weekly Review, as well as State's Diplomatic Summary and Staff Summary. Bromley Smith said that he regularly looked over the Weekly for good reading for the President. Occasionally, he and other staff members highly commended pieces in the CIB and the Weekly.

Notwithstanding these various sources of intelligence, Clifton remarked toward the end of August 1962 that the President, the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of Defense were coming to rely more heavily on the PICL as the sum of available intelligence. (In October 1963 Secretary Rusk told Gen. Clifton that he found the Checklist a "damned useful" document.)

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Following a suggestion by Clifton, the PICL in/1962 made an innovation by running a review of events over the past month. In this case it was a summary of what had been happening in Berlin, which was still under the cloud of Khrushchev's threats to sign a peace treaty with East Germany that would allegedly nullify Allied rights. Clifton liked the way this feature came out.

One issue of the PICL, that of 14 September 1962, ^{Sat}~~was~~ just right with Gen. Clifton. It had half a dozen items plus some notes and a map. It also recorded at the end that OCI, as had been its habit, had taken to the White House several Documents of Interest, material that OCI thought Clifton and the President would want to read in its pristine state. Clifton said this issue (copy will be attached) was full of "good poop" and was in exactly the style he likes^d best (obviously reflecting JFK's preferences).

Clifton took a great interest in the kind of language OCI used and frequently nudged the PICL writers towards the style that would be most agreeable to the President. On one occasion he chided James Featherstone on the slangy way a Soviet item was written. It said that the Rostov area, where there was rioting recently, "has been giving Moscow fits."

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Another time, he said the President was "delighted with the
racy language" of ^{the} 24 September book and had remarked, "They
must have got some new men on."

Gen. Clifton told Phil Kennedy that he hoped this kind of thing would continue. Kennedy assured him that it would but added that OCI tried hard to avoid appearing flip. Clifton recalled that he had once admonished OCI for flippancy, whereupon he had noticed immediately that the writing had started flattening out. He didn't mean for OCI to roll things too flat.

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For a months in 1962 the PICL carefully followed the buildup of Soviet personnel and military equipment in Cuba. However, it did not carry [] and refugee reports of the presence of offensive missiles in Cuba because these reports lacked confirmation from photo intelligence.

On 15 October, the National Photo Interpretation Center (NPIC) analyzed the pictures taken by [] on his mission over Cuba the day before. It found deployment of offensive missiles. After that, the facts about the missiles did not have to be conveyed in the PICL []

[] The Committee was briefed each day during the crisis by DCI McCone.

The CIB, the Cuban Daily Summary and other OCI publications except the PICL were barred from 6 September from reporting anything concerning offensive missiles in Cuba. They maintained intensive reporting on all other aspects of the Cuban situation, however.

Gen. Clifton and Bromley Smith commented to OCI's Philip Kennedy that the 22 October PICL was a "really hairy" book. It led off with a run-down of the Cuban situation, confirming the presence of the most effective radar for SAM guidance and putting the number of confirmed SAM sites at 24. (Nothing was said about offensive missiles, however.) It

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also reported the arrival in Havana of a Soviet transport plane with 140 passengers, some of them probably important. This development elicited great interest and concern.

That night, using maps prepared by OCI, President Kennedy made a TV address, announcing the discovery of offensive missiles and the establishment of a quarantine on shipping to Cuba. OCI set up a 24-hour task force to cover the ensuing international crisis. Besides maintaining the regular publications, the task force turned out special memoranda for the White House every few hours.

On 23 October, [] took the PICL and four memos to the White House. While Gen. Clifton was reading, McGeorge Bundy came into the room asking if the PICL was there. Clifton said yes, and commented that it had a lot of good material, whereupon he and Bundy headed for the President's office. President Kennedy called down asking for them and the PICL while they were on their way.

In a memorandum of 5 November to R. Jack Smith, who had succeeded Huntington Sheldon as AD/CI in April, DCI McCone commended OCI for the "outstanding work" it had been performing.

Three days before that, the President commented that the day's PICL was the first "cheerful" one he had read "in months."

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The cheer is not difficult to identify. The issue reported that photography showed that the offensive missile sites were being closed down and the equipment removed, that Castro was nervous and hesitant in his public speech on the crisis, and that Soviet and Cuban prestige were continuing their decline among Latin American and pro-Castro groups as a result of the recent events.

Aerial hijacking had not begun during the Kennedy administration but in February 1963 Communists hijacked the Venezuelan freighter Anzoategui and presumably headed for Cuba. The US Navy was asked to help in the search for the ship, but the PICL on 15 February had to report "There is no current fix." OCI's Thomas Patton took the book to the White House and recorded that there was "much amusement over the Navy's discomfiture at not finding the Venezuelan ship." Arthur Schlesinger writes that "The President was vastly, if somewhat amusedly, annoyed by the incapacity of his government to help Caracas cope with the situation."⁴⁸ (The ship was captured in Brazil and returned to Venezuela.)

Clifton steadily tried to keep OCI off the reefs not only regarding the style of the PICL but also its substance. He did not want to worry Mr. Kennedy unnecessarily or provoke strong reactions by treading on some sensitivities, which

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might be unknown to the PICL staff. On Saturday, 1 June 1963, after the Checklist had been delivered to the White House, the Deputy DCI, Gen. Marshall Carter, called OCI's Waldo Dubberstein to report that Gen. Clifton felt that the lead item on Cuba in that day's PICL was too alarming and that the President would be immediately disturbed by it. Therefore Clifton was not calling it to his attention. Carter asked that a better rundown on Cuba be done. The alarming item expressed the "feeling" of "our people in Miami" that Soviet activity in Cuba had increased. Some of this feeling could have come from exaggerated accounts of military equipment off-loaded from a Soviet ship and from descriptions of a cruise missile site. At the same time, an exile leader was reported to be planning military operations against Cuba within the next six weeks. A memorandum dealing with these reports in perspective was sent to the White House after the weekend.

Some months earlier, the PICL reported that an Italian freighter, the Cannaregio, then in Havana under charter to the USSR, would leave with a cargo of arms for Venezuela. Clifton said this item "would stand the President's hair on end." The situation was not helped by the fact that the ship eluded tracking at the beginning of its voyage. However, in a few days the PICL said it doubted that the ship was carrying arms, and soon it arrived in Venezuela, where it was boarded by marines. Another "hot" episode was over.

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PICL reports could set the policy machinery in motion immediately. Some Cuban exiles, determined to make new raids on their homeland, were in Costa Rica with a B-26 bomber at a time when a meeting was coming up in San Jose of the presidents of the US, Mexico, and Central America. The PICL said on 11 March 1963 that President Orlich of Costa Rica had ruled that the bomber be held on the ground until after the meeting. However, the plane was operable and could easily be flown away because of poor security at the airport. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The President was "sent aloft" by an item in February 1963 reporting that Haitian President Duvalier was losing his grip. [REDACTED]

claimed that Duvalier was planning to flee the country with as much money as he could lay his hands on. Such an action presumably would have made Haiti easier prey to invaders.

Somewhat puzzling is the case of a report on Greece in the Checklist of 5 April 1963. It said that there was a growing anti-monarchical trend in the country, that [REDACTED] and other leftists the pro-Communists might unite in opposition to the monarchy, and that the King might counter such a development by backing

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the establishment of a military dictatorship. Bromley Smith told [] who had the White House run that day, that he thought the item was pretty strong and was the kind that might "hit the circuit-breaker" when the President read it. Smith did not explain his reaction, nor is there any follow-up record of how the President took the report.

When the President was on tour abroad, the PICL was cabled to him daily, but his interests were then somewhat different than they were in Washington. In the late spring of 1963, President Kennedy made a European tour. Gen. Clifton, who was with the Presidential party, kept in touch with the White House by phone.

[] []

OCI's relationship with the White House was close, informal and many-sided during the Kennedy administration. Although the meeting each morning was the main point of contact, more was accomplished there than the transmission of the PICL and an exchange of questions and answers about it. It will already be obvious that very frequently the OCI representatives picked up the President's own reactions, they learned of

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decisions he had made in response to intelligence, and they received requests for further information on certain questions. When Clifton, Smith, or Bundy mentioned that Mr. Kennedy was interested in a topic, the PICL team would bring the Agency's latest issuances on the subject, ^{or a brand-new memorandum would be written.} All this interchange was useful in keeping OCI on the track of the President's needs.

The White House meetings in the latter half of 1963 were punctuated by a few language problems, a touch of humor now and then, and cases of strong reactions from the Chief Executive.

In August a group of guerillas led by a Dominican adventurer named Cantave invaded the north coast of Haiti. The PICL referred to Cantave's "caper"; "thereby provoking a reaction from Bromley Smith. He said the word raised for him a picture of intoxicated persons jumping in fountains, but he was not deeply disturbed.

In Cuba, regulations governing aircraft flights were tightened.

The 12 September Checklist reported that Mme. Nhu was coming to the US and had engagements booked for one week with

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the networks, and the Women's Press Club. With Gen. Clifton absent, Bromley Smith called Paul Kattenburg, the Director of the South Vietnam Special Group at State, to get further information about Mme. Nhu's plans and was told that she would be appearing at the National Press Club. This news shook Smith up. He was sure the President would hit the ceiling and he wished that Clifton were around to take the Checklist to the President.

Another PICL item with a kick in it ran on 9 October and reported that the French, "willing as ever to try and steal a march on the Anglo-Saxons," had suggested to Indonesia that trade be developed, especially in rubber. Bromley Smith predicted, "all hell will break loose" when the President reads this.

Fortunately, the OCI representatives were never in the direct line of fire when Mr. Kennedy exploded, if indeed he did.

On 19 November, Gen. Clifton gave Philip B. Kennedy requirements for the period of the President's trip to Texas. He wanted a short cable for Friday, the 22nd; the next day the President would be at the LBJ ranch. "We will want a cable on Saturday if only to impress Johnson with how closely the President

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keeps in touch," said Clifton. That meeting ended with Clifton trying to picture the President "eyeball to eyeball with one of those steers."

On 21 November, James P. Hanrahan took the PICL to the White House. Bromley Smith read the publication; Gen. Clifton was off making preparations for the President's trip. Smith liked a Document of Interest on the debriefing of [] who had been held for a while by the Soviets. Then he came upon a ticker item reporting that the Danish premier had given a rocking chair to Khrushchev so that the Kremlin and the White House could rock in time. Smith dashed off saying he had to show this to Bundy.

On Friday, the fatal 22nd, ^{Philip} ~~John~~ Kennedy saw Bromley Smith and left copies of a further debriefing of [] which would be included in the President's reading package being sent to Glen Ora Sunday morning. Smith directed that the next day's PICL, to be sent by wire to Texas, be a brief, "headline-type" wrap-up, with a maximum of two sentences per item.

It was to be otherwise. The PICL of 23 November was a husky number, of five unusually long items plus six notes. It was written for the new President, Lyndon Johnson. AD/CI R. J. Smith took this issue to DCI McCone at the Agency's

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East Building. McCone asked Smith to deliver the Checklist in the usual way to the White House. There R. J. Smith explained that OCI had tried to provide, as unobtrusively as possible, a bit of background for Mr. Johnson. Bromley Smith thought the effort was fine and hoped that OCI would make sure that the pointer was not too much in evidence. For part of the time that the Smiths were conferring, the DCI was with President Johnson in Bundy's Office, where McCone showed Johnson the Checklist. The President expressed approval and wanted the publication continued without change for the time being.

Another era in support for the President was about to begin.

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The Johnson Era ~~Secret~~

For most employees of the Federal government, work continues unchanged when a new President moves into the White House. Employees of the Bureau of Reclamation, the Labor-Management Services Administration, or the Commodity Exchange Authority all go about their jobs in their accustomed ways, though changes of administration policy can ultimately have an effect. Even the pattern of most intelligence work--collection and the production of finished intelligence for a considerable number of officials--remains undisturbed. But for those who are turning out intelligence specifically for the President, everything is apt to change as soon as a new Chief Executive takes over. How wide-ranging will the new President's interest in foreign countries and in international relations be? How much appetite will he have for intelligence? Will large and frequent servings be in order, or modest portions only as absolutely required? Will he want merely facts, or facts plus interpretation and analysis? Separated or homogenized? Is he willing to read a regular intelligence document, or does he prefer to be briefed?

In each of the previous administrations, OCI had established a satisfactory channel directly to the President. However, the system had never carried over from one incumbent

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to the next. Eisenhower did not want the personal weekly briefing from the Director that Truman had received; the General preferred to ~~rely on the~~ ~~rely on the~~ weekly meetings of the National Security Council. Kennedy did not like to use the NSC with any regularity. Instead he found just what he wanted in the personal, daily intelligence Checklist devised for him five months after he entered office.

The Checklist system worked so well with Kennedy that OCI and the Director naturally hoped to continue it with Lyndon Johnson, especially as it became apparent that Johnson, like his predecessor, was not going to have regular NSC meetings. Eventually OCI succeeded, but after many months of frustration. It was only when he had a firm hold of his administration and when certain foreign situations forced themselves upon his attention that President Johnson discovered the usefulness of a daily current intelligence document.

For a few days after the assassination of President Kennedy, R. J. Smith took the Checklist to DCI McCone at East Building at 8:30 a.m. The Director then held a staff meeting, after which R. J. Smith personally took the Checklist to Bromley Smith and Gen. Clifton in the White House. The briefing of President Johnson from the Checklist, however, was done by McCone, who saw the President daily for about three weeks after the assassination. ⁵²/₁

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Although OCI had provided more detail and background information than usual in its first intelligence books for President Johnson, McCone on 24 November passed the word through DDI Cline that there should be more but shorter items. McCone said the President expected that topics appearing in the Checklist would be followed up in later issues; therefore, OCI should make even negative reports. For that day's ^{issue}, Cline said that the Checklist should cover military activity in South Vietnam, the fighting in Laos, Soviet ICBM developments, and problems in the Berlin air corridors and Venezuela.

On 5 December, the President held a meeting of the NSC to which the chairmen and ~~a~~ ^{minority leaders} of the leading Congressional committees were invited. Most of the guests had to be hurriedly briefed on COMINT. Clinton B. Conger, Chief of OCI's Presentations Branch and the office's briefing drafter, put together the intelligence presentation on the Soviet military position, which was presented by DCI McCone. Conger was present at the briefing to handle the charts on the easel. Before the meeting started, the President gave a nod and in came his photographer, Okimoto. He began shooting pictures left and right. McCone was aghast, finally looking around at Conger, who had managed to turn over a before the first picture was taken. A week later there was similar NSC meeting on China.

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Johnson did not have a large number of NSC meetings, but when he did they normally began with an intelligence briefing, usually prepared by Conger on the basis of materials from OCI, OSR, and OER, as appropriate. ~~SI~~/

Around the middle of December, when McCone stopped seeing the President daily, the White House staff tried to get the President to read the Checklist. They were largely unsuccessful, although McGeorge Bundy was able to do some oral briefing, Checklist in hand. On 16 December, Gen. Clifton told OCI's [] "If we can't penetrate this sort of wall today or tomorrow, we'll just have to try something else." Occasionally things went well. On the 18th, Clifton said that the staff had finally managed to get the President to read "the books"--probably two or three issues.

At Christmastime, the President went to his Texas ranch and shortly after Christmas had Chancellor Erhard as a visitor for several days. The PICL was cabled to the ranch each day. The report was limited to notes covering important developments and any information that might be useful in the talks with Erhard. The President returned to Washington on 5 January, and the next day Gen. Clifton, who had been at the ranch, told [] that he had been able to get the Checklist to the President with some regularity once Erhard had gone.

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On 8 January, however, Clifton was having difficulties again--the President had not read the intelligence document since leaving Texas. Clifton thought there would be a little let-up in the press of business after that day's State of the Union speech. He asked Philip Kennedy for a special report, briefly treating important and still-current problems that were covered in the books the President hadn't read. Clifton thought, in fact, that it would be good to try the system of giving the President a summary of significant intelligence twice a week.

OCI quickly put together an experimental President's Intelligence Review, covering the period 4-9 January. This was taken by Richard Lehman, Assistant for Special Projects, to Gen. Clifton on 9 January. Clifton thought the Review was the best solution to the problem of the President's intelligence reading. He and Bundy were agreed that the President would not accept a daily intelligence briefing. The President had instructed Clifton that the DCI was to see him whenever he wished but that otherwise the President relied on Bundy and Clifton to stay on top of the intelligence. Because the President was likely to ask them with no warning for the latest word, the daily Checklist had to continue. Clifton suggested that the Checklist periodically include a special blue- or green-bordered page containing an operational report. ⁵²~~52~~

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The next morning Gen. Clifton called Lehman to report that the White House was very pleased with the Review, and wanted it continued. It had been tried on the President at breakfast and it had "worked like a charm." ⁵³~~53~~

Because the President was not reading the Checklist every day, DCI McCone wanted it sent to a few more high-level officials beyond the small circle of readers in Kennedy's time--the Secretaries of State and Defense, McGeorge Bundy at the White House, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. Therefore he obtained permission in February to extend the dissemination to four additional top officials in the State Department, two more in Defense, one on the Joint Chiefs staff, plus the Secretary of the Treasury and the Attorney-General. ⁵⁴~~54~~

Besides doing the semi-weekly Review and the PICL, OCI was writing memoranda in response to requests from the White House staff, and DCI McCone was briefing the President from time to time. The Checklist writers still took the publication to Bromley Smith and Gen. Clifton each morning and received their comments, plus occasional playback from the President. When unusually interesting items in the PICL caught his eye, Clifton would make a point of bringing them to the President's attention. On 21 January, for example, he was taken with an item featuring quotable statements by

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Khrushchev. (For example, the Soviet chairman had been bragging about new rockets, but said, "All the same, you cannot put a rocket into soup.") A few days later, when it looked as though war would break out on Cyprus at any time despite a strong US mediation effort, Clifton instructed OCI to keep the White House "up to the minute" on developments. "Hours will make the difference," he said.

Gen. Clifton told James Hanrahan on 28 January that he had talked with the President about the Intelligence Review and Mr. Johnson had said it was just fine. He found it a very valuable supplement to his occasional briefings from the DCI and he wanted it continued without change.

On 25 March the President's plans to spend a weekend in Texas prompted Gen. Clifton to comment that Mr. Johnson read his intelligence while at the ranch; he was often up and asking for it by 8:15 a.m. But it was hard to catch him in Washington. The next day Clifton said that it was not necessary for the OCI representatives to meet him at 9:30 a.m., the book did not move upstairs that fast. He asked that the meetings take place at 10 in the future.

Early in 1964, the President drew his aides Bill Moyers and Jack Valenti into the intelligence picture. He wanted one of them present when he read the Review at breakfast and he was reported occasionally as discussing Checklist items with them. Although the PICL writers continued to

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meet and talk with Bromley Smith and Gen. Clifton, it began to look as though Moyers and Valenti were taking the documents to the President.

James C. Graham, Acting AD/CI, took up with DDI Ray Cline the possibility of inviting Moyers to CIA headquarters for lunch and a briefing. Cline first wanted to discuss the White House problem with McCone, and asked Graham for a little memorandum on how things were going.^{55g/} OCI drew up a statement for Cline making the principal points that it had no way of knowing whether it was meeting the President's needs because it had no feedback from him, in contrast to the situation under Kennedy. The reason for this was that OCI's contacts at the White House did not deal directly with the President on intelligence matters. OCI hoped to be able to establish close links to the President's immediate staff.^{56g/}

Things remained in a confused state for the next few months, with only occasional indications that OCI's presidential publications had hit the mark. Clifton commented in May that the Review was the best means of reaching the President, although he said the PICL registered at times when Valenti was interested in an item. There were days when the President read and initialed both the Review and the PICL. One day when the PICL was heavy on the side of bad news, Clifton said, "It's no wonder the President doesn't

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want to read this stuff--it annoys you." From mid-year on, Mr. Johnson made frequent campaign trips around the country. Clifton, who was usually with him, said he had more luck getting the President to read his intelligence on the return flights than on the way out, when Mr. Johnson was studying his speeches.

As the election neared, Secretary of State Rusk expressed some concern to McCone about the security of the Checklist and seemed to prefer that dissemination be limited to the President, Secretary of Defense McNamara and himself. McCone passed the word down and also conveyed his feeling that the President should read the Checklist daily, or have it read to him, and should not depend on the semi-weekly Review.⁵⁷ ~~TOP SECRET~~

AD/CI R. J. Smith responded in a memorandum of 5 November 1964. He believed that the Agency would have a graceful way of dropping some of the Checklist readers if the publication were to undergo a transformation in which it would acquire a new name, a new cover, and a new format. It would become President Johnson's publication, specifically designed to meet his needs. To increase the chances of its being read by the Chief Executive, it would be produced to conform to the President's working habits and would be delivered in late afternoon. Smith noted that the Review, which Mr. Johnson "usually reads," was timed for his evening perusal. Smith

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also noted the importance of finding a way to establish direct contact with the President so that OCI could get feedback and thus avoid writing in a vacuum. ⁵⁸8/

The PDB Appears

Smith's proposal for a new publication was accepted and was rapidly put into effect. The last Checklist was dated 30 November 1964 and the next day the first issue of the President's Daily Brief (PDB) was delivered to the White House. In substance it resembled the PICL, but it had a fresh appearance--chiefly because it was printed on legal-sized paper--and it came out late in the afternoon instead of early in the morning. Jack Valenti sent this first issue back to McGeorge Bundy saying that the President read it, liked it, and wanted it continued. Dissemination was cut back, so that the only persons receiving the PDB outside the White House were the Secretary and Under Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the Deputy Secretary and one Assistant Secretary, the Treasury Secretary, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and Gen. Carroll, the head of DIA.

The semi-weekly Review was dropped, but by 16 December the DCI ordered that a summary of OCI's Current Intelligence Weekly Review be included with each Friday's PDB. The summary, titled Highlights of the Week, lasted only until 26 February 1965, having failed to arouse presidential interest.

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In the ensuing weeks and months, OCI was naturally watching for indications of the success or failure of the restyled daily for the President. On 13 January, PDB writer Thomas Patton noted that Bromley Smith wrote "The President" in the upper right corner of Copy No. 1. Patton asked whether Smith would like OCI to type this on. No, said Smith, putting it on in long-hand gave it a human touch.

On 18 January, the Brief went from a legal-sized to a letter-sized document as a result of discussions between McGeorge Bundy and Ray Cline. Bromley Smith said he liked the new format and he thought the South Vietnam item was "exactly right." ^{It} ~~He~~ reported very briefly and generally that Saigon had a new cabinet. The President, Smith said, was not interested in the names of generals and ministers and didn't follow such details.

Further experiments in page size followed a talk McCone had with the President, but nothing came of them. There was even a sample Brief that the President could put in his pocket, though the thought of having sensitive material handled this way made Bromley Smith groan.

In mid-February, Bromley Smith said that the Vietnam situation report, which OCI had begun sending to the White House daily at 8 a.m., was proving to be very useful; it was going up to the President every morning.

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It should not be imagined that the PDB writers always transacted their business with Bromley Smith in tranquillity. Occasionally there was a certain amount of commotion around Smith's office because of people coming and going to different meetings in the White House. One day Smith closed his door, explaining that

Bundy might be able to work this way with all the Indians charging in all the time, but I can't, especially since I was here till after 11 last night waiting for the President to leave.

The Impact of Santo Domingo

On 24 April 1965 events took place that had the effect of improving the standing of OCI publications in the White House. On that day an uprising began against the provisional government of the Dominican Republic. The US fear that Communists might seize control of the country led to the prompt dispatch of Marines to Santo Domingo. By coincidence, the day they landed--28 April--was also the day that Admiral William Raborn was sworn in as DCI, succeeding John McCone. President Johnson could hardly get enough intelligence on the Dominican situation, and Admiral Raborn was determined to provide the best service possible. The day after he took office, the Admiral ordered the establishment of a CIA task force on the Dominican Republic under E. Drexel Godfrey, chief of OCI's Western Area. As directed, it provided

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"complete and around-the-clock CIA intelligence support to the White House." Its first task each day was to brief Raborn to put him in readiness to deal with calls from the White House. Periodically throughout the day and night it issued round-up situation reports, and when necessary, spot reports of particular developments. All these reports were teletyped to the White House. They were read by Mr. Johnson, who was now described by Bromley Smith as a President "who eats up information." OCI, of course, continued to put out its regular publications. It was during the Dominican crisis that word was received that the President's Daily Brief had taken firm root in the White House. Bill Moyers said on 21 May that the President read it "avidly." ⁵⁹~~60~~/

The increased tempo of intelligence service to the Chief Executive prompted further consideration of the proper way to get material to him. DDCI Richard Helms and DDI Ray Cline agreed that the NSC Staff (McGeorge Bundy, Bromley Smith, and the White House Situation Room) should be the place of entry for intelligence for the President, although information copies could be sent to Moyers and Valenti. Helms and Cline said that a "greased channel" through Bundy should be established for the PDB and any other reports the DCI wants to be sure the President sees. ⁶⁰~~61~~/ AD/CI Jack Smith commented on 20 May that a "greased channel" already appeared to exist for the PDB. ⁶¹~~62~~/

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The hectic atmosphere in the spring of 1965, with the Dominican situation coming on top of growing difficulties in Vietnam, caused the men in the White House to ask more of intelligence and to react to it more sharply. Bromley Smith said the President has a "very short reaction fuse." He wanted to hear first from official sources and not from the press about major developments, so rapid dissemination was essential. Smith also warned that OCI would soon be asked to report on every coup and to cover all present and potential trouble spots with high precision. He said that in the future, OCI's reports would not say that the Valencia regime is shaky, but that "Valencia is going to be overthrown by a coup on the umpteenth July by X in Toonerville." Since this would be asking the impossible in most cases, Richard Lehman, OCI's Assistant for Special Projects, went to see Bill Moyers. He explained that OCI could write 50 pages of intelligence warnings a day, thereby taking out insurance against any possible contingency, but that the office did not believe this would really serve the President. Lehman said OCI tried to be highly selective in warning of coups and the like. Moyers expressed understanding of OCI's difficulties, and the fire died down. ⁶²~~12~~/ This episode had an amusing sequel about eight months later when Bromley Smith pondered the series of army coups in the republics of West Africa.

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He said he didn't think the President wanted or needed to be informed in advance of every threatened coup. "Otherwise," he said, "you could fill the book with that sort of thing."

The system for supplying current intelligence to President Johnson was now working better than previously. To be sure, OCI did not benefit from the steady presidential playback it had enjoyed under John Kennedy. On the other hand, OCI was fairly confident that the President was reading the PDB regularly, and the writers on the PDB team received useful suggestions, criticisms, and reactions--usually from Bromley Smith--when they delivered the publication each day.

One day in June 1965 the first paragraph of the lead item in the PDB said "Accumulating information suggests that Hanoi is bringing North Vietnam to a state of semi-mobilization." The second paragraph explained that Hanoi's action was far short of classic mobilization for offensive operations; OCI considered the move defensive and was therefore inclined to discount the view of one British expert who thought a large-scale attack would soon be made across the 17th parallel.

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Foreign developments often provoked spirited reactions from Bromley Smith, but it was not often that he expressed surprise at the nature of the intelligence he was reading, substance apart. One such occasion, however, came when the PDB ran an item about dissension between Rumania and the Soviet Union. [] that Ceausescu and Maurer had complained to Shelepin that the USSR acts on the international scene without consulting its allies, just as in Stalin's time. The Rumanians cited the 1962 missile adventure in Cuba and Soviet positions on disarmament. Shelepin agreed that more coordination was needed. Smith was particularly interested in this item and remarked to PDB writer Archer C. Bush that it was "fantastic" that this kind of information could be obtained.

OCI produced many memoranda upon request by White House personnel, who were often directly conveying the President's

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wishes. For a considerable period of time, both the Kennedy and Johnson administrations had been trying to find a means by which the supposed desire of some West European countries to share in the ownership and control of nuclear weapons could be satisfied. The scheme that finally came to have official backing was the proposed multilateral nuclear force (MLF) of surface vessels with jointly owned nuclear weapons. The ships were to be manned by mixed crews of personnel from most NATO countries. Washington officialdom was sharply divided over this proposal and the pro- and anti-MLF forces steadily bombarded the White House with their arguments. Towards the end of 1965, the White House asked OCI for an "objective" report on the status and implications of the plan. The President's advisers sent the word that they were "ecstatic" over the memorandum drafted by [redacted]. Soon afterwards, President Johnson dropped the MLF idea as politically unfeasible and militarily unnecessary.

Bromley Smith now and then modified or rewrote PDB items when he felt that they might confuse or unduly alarm the President. In December 1965, for example, President Johnson ordered a halt in the bombing of Vietnam in the hope of getting negotiations started. A PDB item reported that Hanoi had broadcast a tough restatement of its position, making no reference to the pause in air strikes. Smith, afraid that this would be taken as a rebuff to the President's

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efforts, reworked the text to avoid this interpretation since the broadcast did not constitute a fully official government statement.

Quite clearly, the White House staff cringed at bad news from Vietnam. When the PDB reported in April 1966 that "the political situation appears to be rapidly worsening" in South Vietnam, and averred that Ky might soon have to take drastic measures to restore authority or make major concessions to the Buddhists, Smith remarked that the article was pessimistic and that he had later information. It was, of course, one of the perils of the PDB operation that the White House sometimes had fresher reports from the field. Smith handed [] cables reporting that Ky was going to formulate a new constitution and that the State Department looked upon this as hopeful. [] agreed that OCI had written in ignorance of this information, but added that offhand he would not be optimistic.

A few days later Smith read in the PDB that "There was no real improvement in the situation today..." and said "You're going to break the President's heart; he thinks things are much better today." When he finished the whole disheartening report, he tossed the book in the air, whistled, and said, "We'll have fun tonight. But that's no reason for not writing it as you see it."

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Smith had cause for unhappiness again when the PDB had to report that a Pakistan official felt that his country was drifting apart from the US and would probably establish closer relationships with the Soviet Union. Smith told PDB writer Allen Valpey that this article was a "shocker" and that Walt Rostow would be disturbed by it. (Rostow had replaced McGeorge Bundy in April 1966.)

Although John McCone had not taken up a White House suggestion that the President's daily give occasional coverage to CIA activities, Admiral Raborn as DCI did adopt this practice. Bromley Smith reacted negatively to these reports, however, apparently believing that President Johnson did not like them. He particularly objected in 1966 to a PDB Annex explaining enthusiastically how CIA used a portable ultra-violet light device in Vietnam to detect guerrillas who had recently handled weapons before mingling with innocent villagers. Smith did not want the Agency to "advertise" in the PDB. He believed that if the President should be informed of some CIA activities, the DCI should send him a memorandum.

Late in July 1966 Bromley Smith said that he had some ideas about the PDB and would like to get together with all the writers. By this time R. J. Smith was DDI, E. Drexel Godfrey was D/OCI and Richard Lehman was DD/OCI. Bromley Smith met with them and the PDB writers in the Langley

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building on 3 August. He prefaced his remarks by expressing his satisfaction with the way the President was being served; he had no criticisms. He explained, however, that while the President "tolerates" anonymous documents, he is much more responsive to a personalized paper. He wondered whether the Brief could be signed by Mr. Helms, now DCI. Then it would become a personal link between the President and the Director. In regard to content, Smith said the PDB did not have to alert the President to impending crises over which he would have no control. Rather, Smith thought the PDB could be most useful by rendering pithy judgments on situations with which the President is or will be faced. Smith said these judgments would be accepted; OCI did not have to support them with argumentation or evidence. Smith emphasized that the Brief writers had to be fully up on US policies and should read presidential speeches. He thought the President was kept adequately informed of Vietnamese military developments by other means; the PDB should carry more Vietnamese political and economic items. Smith urged that the Brief increase its coverage of Europe and said that Panama was another subject high on the priority list. ⁶³ ~~TOP SECRET~~/

Helms did not take up the idea of personally signing the PDB, but OCI promptly set about adopting Smith's suggestions as to content. Smith soon commented that he noticed the change. ⁶⁴ ~~TOP SECRET~~/

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The DDI Operations Center, under the executive direction of the D/OCI, has^d superseded the Watch Office in 1965 and played its role in supplying current intelligence to the White House. Whenever any information of great importance came in at night, the Senior Duty Officer would have the White House Situation Room informed immediately. On most of these occasions the SDO and the Watch Officers were aware that the President was personally taking an interest in the developments. Sometimes the initial report opened up a sequence that involved many incoming messages, calls to and from the White House, and hours of intensive work.

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The Final Arrangement

A major alteration in the PDB system occurred at the end of February 1967. Seemingly all that was involved was that President Johnson decided that he would rather get the Brief in the morning than in the evening. This change in delivery time, however, forced other changes. The President wanted the Brief at 6:30 a.m., just before he began reading the newspapers. This meant that OCI's closing time on the book was 5 a.m. Nonetheless, the PDB had to be written in full knowledge of what was in the morning press. As E. Drexel Godfrey commented, the schedule put "the highest premium on making the publication up to the minute." ⁶⁶~~55~~/

Because the Brief now had to be delivered to the White House Situation Room by 6 a.m., there was no longer a member of the President's staff up and available to receive the book and comment on it. This meant that there was no point

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in having the PDB writers make the trip to the White House. From this time on, the PDB was delivered by couriers. To make up for the loss of the morning conversations with Bromley Smith, an OCI staff member would visit him occasionally to check on how things were going, and there was also communication by phone.

Shortly after the changeover to the new schedule for the PDB, Bromley Smith, commenting on the President's reaction, said emphatically that "we are much more certain now that he's reading it." He also made a point he was to make several times subsequently, which was that he disapproved of annexes to the Brief. He was afraid that if the Brief were burdened with an annex, the President would put it aside for later reading--and then not get back to it. In Smith's view, the PDB should be of a length which the President could whip through quickly. It would be better, he insisted, if annex-type reports were sent down separately. Smith thought it was an excellent idea for the Brief to summarize the conclusions of "important" national estimates. ⁶⁷ ~~13~~/

Smith continued to admonish OCI writers now and then about the words and phrases they employed in the PDB. He admitted that it was hard to know where to draw the line, but he did not like "hopping mad," nor, on another occasion,

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did he care for a description of India as an "unwilling bride." As a rule of thumb, he said the writers should avoid seeming frivolous or light-hearted.

At the President's request, OCI on 7 September 1967 began to attach to the Brief a Special Report on North Vietnam that dealt mainly with the effects of the war. The only copy to go outside of the Agency was addressed: "For Bromley Smith - Eyes Only for the President." Beginning with the issue of 6 October, this Special Report carried a new section on North Vietnamese treatment of ^{US} political attitudes toward the war, expressed in statements and demonstrations.

In November DCI Helms talked with Drexel Godfrey and Richard Lehman about the PDB. The Director expressed great satisfaction with both the Brief and the Special Report. He said the latter was "really hitting the mark." He urged that OCI try harder to come up with items on the personalities of men familiar to the President, who Helms said, thinks in terms of personalities. Helms also asked that the PDB give more attention to coming visits of world VIPs to Washington and to each other.

No major changes in the PDB were made during President Johnson's time after the introduction of the Special Report

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on North Vietnam.. To all appearances, the Brief had evolved into a document satisfactory to the President, and it kept serving its purpose throughout the rest of the administration.

All OCI analysts who have worked on the PDB are familiar with a photograph of President and Lady Bird Johnson sitting in the White House in dressing gowns. Mrs. Johnson is holding their first grandson, while the President is looking at the President's Daily Brief. This homey picture epitomizes the position OCI hoped the Brief occupied in the White House. And perhaps it did.

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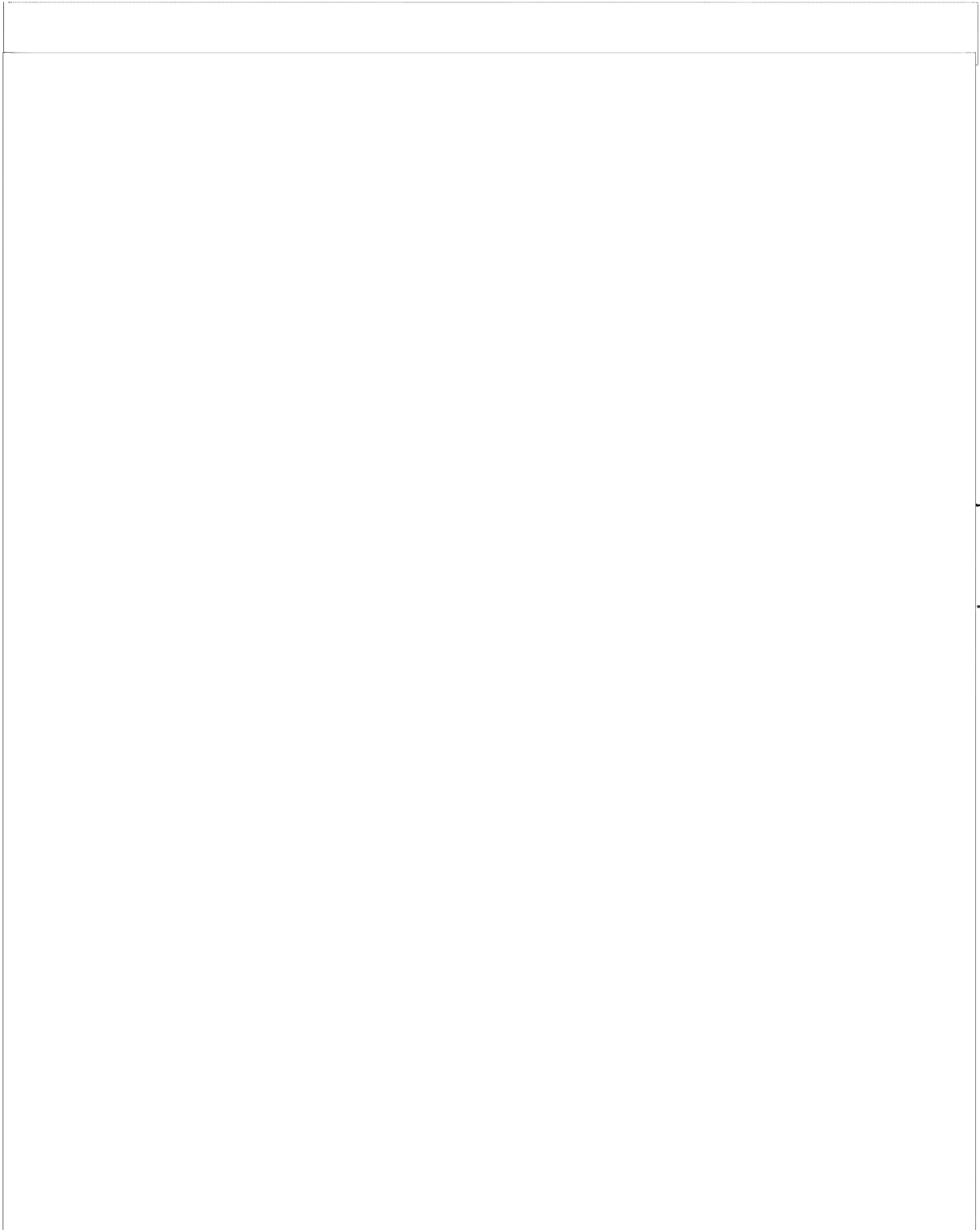
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Figure 4
President Johnson
reading the PDB
After p. 113

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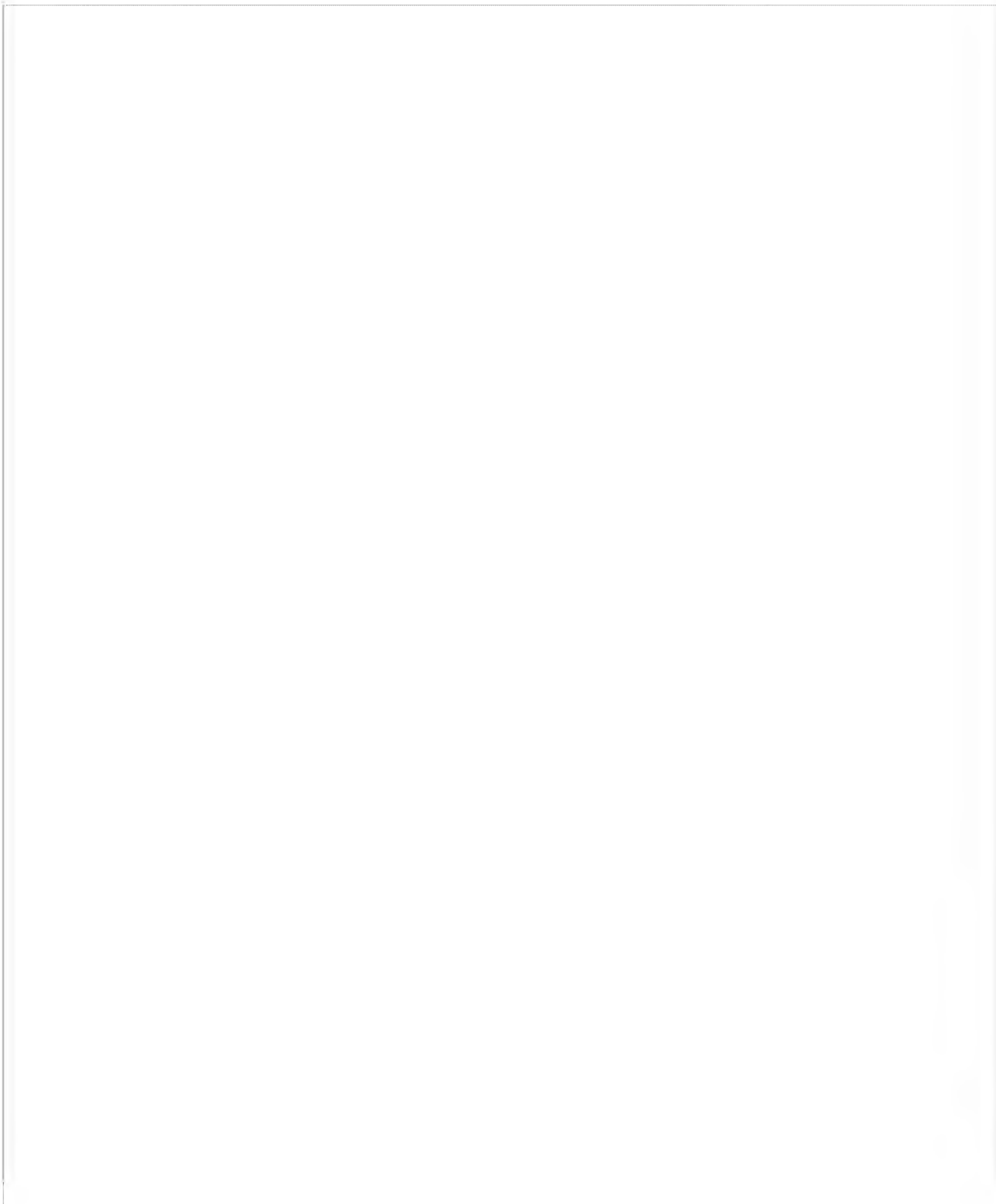


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18 April 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR:

The monograph as
read approved by Sheldon
May 1973

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